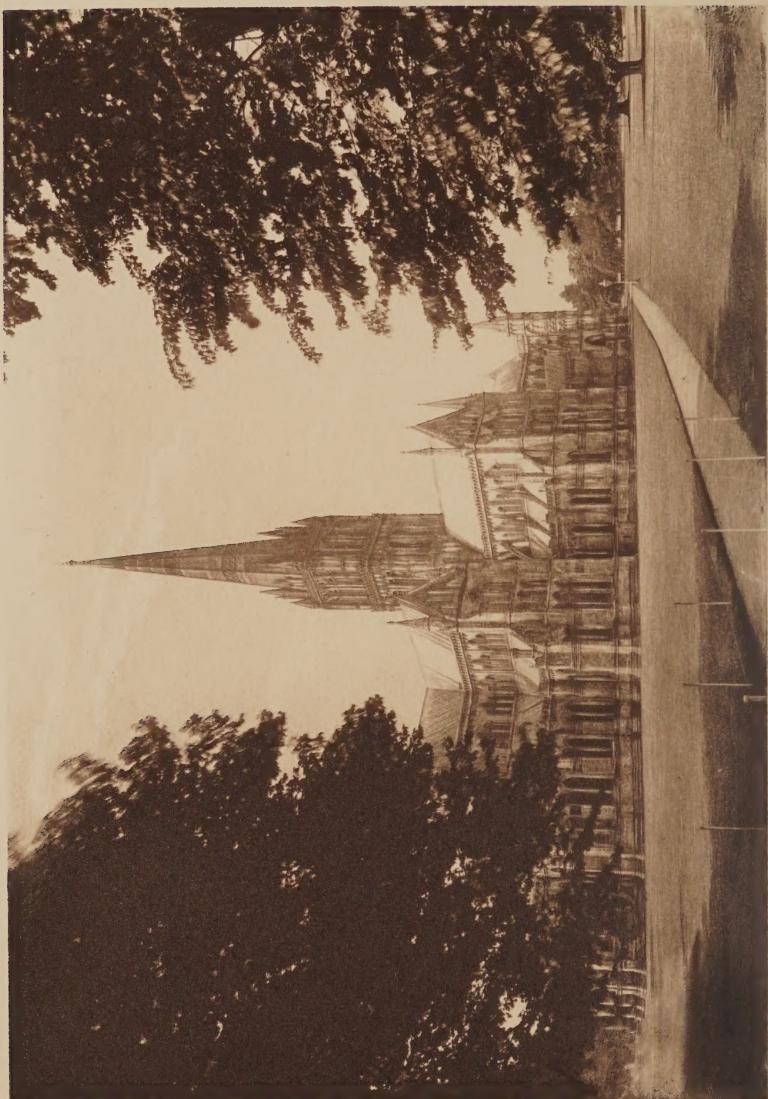


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Edited by Michael Sadleir

In Fourteen Volumes
With Photographs of Barsetshire
by Charles S. Olcott

The LAST CHRONICLE of BARSET
Volume the Third



THE
LAST CHRONICLE
OF BARSET

By Anthony Trollope

Volume II Part I

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

CHAPTER XLIV

“I Suppose I must let You have it”

CROSBIE had been preparing the exact words with which he assailed Mr. Butterwell for the last quarter of an hour, before they were uttered. There is always a difficulty in the choice, not only of the words with which money should be borrowed, but of the fashion after which they should be spoken. There is the slow deliberate manner, in using which the borrower attempts to carry the wished-for lender along with him by force of argument, and to prove that the desire to borrow shows no imprudence on his own part, and that a tendency to lend will show none on the part of the intended lender. It may be said that this mode fails oftener than any other. There is the piteous manner,—the plea for commiseration. “My dear fellow, unless you will see me through now, upon my word I shall be very badly off.” And this manner may be divided again into two. There is the plea piteous with a lie, and the plea piteous with a truth. “You shall have it again in two months as sure as the sun rises.” That is generally the plea piteous with a lie. Or it may be as follows: “It is only fair to say that I don’t quite know when I can pay it back.” This is the plea piteous with a truth, and upon the whole I think that this is generally the most successful mode of borrowing. And there is the assured demand,—which betokens a close intimacy. “Old fellow, can you let me have

thirty pounds? No? Just put your name, then, on the back of this, and I'll get it done in the City." The worst of that manner is, that the bill so often does not get itself done in the City. Then there is the sudden attack,—that being the manner to which Crosbie had recourse in the present instance. That there are other modes of borrowing by means of which youth becomes indebted to age, and love to respect, and ignorance to experience, is a matter of course. It will be understood that I am here speaking only of borrowing and lending between the Butterwells and Crosbies of the world. "I have come to you in great distress," said Crosbie. "I wonder whether you can help me. I want you to lend me five hundred pounds." Mr. Butterwell, when he heard the words, dropped the paper which he was reading from his hand, and stared at Crosbie over his spectacles.

"Five hundred pounds," he said. "Dear me, Crosbie; that's a large sum of money."

"Yes, it is,—a very large sum. Half that is what I want at once; but I shall want the other half in a month."

"I thought that you were always so much above the world in money matters. Gracious me;—nothing that I have heard for a long time has astonished me more. I don't know why, but I always thought that you had your things so very snug."

Crosbie was aware that he had made one very great step towards success. The idea had been presented to Mr. Butterwell's mind, and had not been instantly rejected as a scandalously iniquitous idea, as an idea to which no reception could be given for a moment. Crosbie had not been treated as was the needy knife-grinder, and had ground to stand upon while he urged his request. "I have been so pressed since my marriage," he said, "that it has been impossible for me to keep things straight."

"But Lady Alexandrina——"

"Yes; of course; I know. I do not like to trouble you with my private affairs;—there is nothing, I think, so bad as washing one's dirty linen in public;—but the truth is,

that I am only now free from the rapacity of the De Courcys. You would hardly believe me if I told you what I've had to pay. What do you think of two hundred and forty-five pounds for bringing her body over here, and burying it at De Courcy.”

“I'd have left it where it was.”

“And so would I. You don't suppose I ordered it to be done. Poor dear thing. If it could do her any good, God knows I would not begrudge it. We had a bad time of it when we were together, but I would have spared nothing for her, alive or dead, that was reasonable. But to make me pay for bringing the body over here, when I never had a shilling with her! By George, it was too bad. And that oaf John De Courcy,—I had to pay his travelling bill too.”

“He didn't come to be buried;—did he?”

“It's too disgusting to talk of, Butterwell; it is indeed. And when I asked for her money that was settled upon me,—it was only two thousand pounds,—they made me go to law, and it seems there was no two thousand pounds to settle. If I like, I can have another lawsuit with the sisters, when the mother is dead. Oh, Butterwell, I have made such a fool of myself. I have come to such shipwreck! Oh, Butterwell, if you could but know it all.”

“Are you free from the De Courcys now?”

“I owe Gazebee, the man who married the other woman, over a thousand pounds. But I pay that off at two hundred a year, and he has a policy on my life.”

“What do you owe that for?”

“Don't ask me. Not that I mind telling you;—furniture, and the lease of a house, and his bill for the marriage settlement,—d—— him.”

“God bless me. They seem to have been very hard upon you.”

“A man doesn't marry an earl's daughter for nothing, Butterwell. And then to think what I lost! It can't be helped now, you know. As a man makes his bed he must

lie on it. I am sometimes so mad with myself when I think over it all,—that I should like to blow my brains out.”

“You must not talk in that way, Crosbie. I hate to hear a man talk like that.”

“I don’t mean that I shall. I’m too much of a coward, I fancy.” A man who desires to soften another man’s heart, should always abuse himself. In softening a woman’s heart, he should abuse her. “But life has been so bitter with me for the last three years! I haven’t had an hour of comfort;—not an hour. I don’t know why I should trouble you with all this, Butterwell. Oh,—about the money; yes; that’s just how I stand. I owed Gazebee something over a thousand pounds, which is arranged as I have told you. Then there were debts, due by my wife,—at least some of them were, I suppose,—and that horrid, ghastly funeral,—and debts, I don’t doubt, due by the cursed old countess. At any rate, to get myself clear I raised something over four hundred pounds, and now I owe five which must be paid, part tomorrow, and the remainder this day month.”

“And you’ve no security?”

“Not a rag, not a shred, not a line, not an acre. There’s my salary, and after paying Gazebee what comes due to him, I can manage to let you have the money within twelve months,—that is, if you can lend it me. I can just do that and live; and if you will assist me with the money, I will do so. That’s what I’ve brought myself to by my own folly.”

“Five hundred pounds is such a large sum of money.”

“Indeed it is.”

“And without any security!”

“I know, Butterwell, that I’ve no right to ask for it. I feel that. Of course I should pay you what interest you please.”

“Money’s about seven now,” said Butterwell.

“I’ve not the slightest objection to seven per cent.,” said Crosbie.

“But that’s on security,” said Butterwell.

“You can name your own terms,” said Crosbie.

Mr. Butterwell got out of his chair, and walked about the room with his hands in his pockets. He was thinking at that moment what Mrs. Butterwell would say to him. “Will an answer do to-morrow morning?” he said. “I would much rather have it to-day,” said Crosbie. Then Mr. Butterwell took another turn about the room. “I suppose I must let you have it,” he said.

“Butterwell,” said Crosbie, “I’m eternally obliged to you. It’s hardly too much to say that you’ve saved me from ruin.”

“Of course I was joking about interest,” said Butterwell. “Five per cent. is the proper thing. You’d better let me have a little acknowledgment. I’ll give you the first half to-morrow.”

They were genuine tears which filled Crosbie’s eyes, as he seized hold of the senior’s hands. “Butterwell,” he said, “what am I to say to you?”

“Nothing at all,—nothing at all.”

“Your kindness makes me feel that I ought not to have come to you.”

“Oh, nonsense. By-the-by, would you mind telling Thompson to bring those papers to me which I gave him yesterday? I promised Optimist I would read them before three, and it’s past two now.” So saying he sat himself down at his table, and Crosbie felt that he was bound to leave the room.

Mr. Butterwell, when he was left alone, did not read the papers which Thompson brought him; but sat, instead, thinking of his five hundred pounds. “Just put them down,” he said to Thompson. So the papers were put down, and there they lay all that day and all the next. Then Thompson took them away again, and it is to be hoped that somebody read them. Five hundred pounds! It was a large sum of money, and Crosbie was a man for whom Mr. Butterwell in truth felt no very strong affection. “Of course he must have it now,” he said to himself. “But where should I be if anything happened to him?” And then he remembered

that Mrs. Butterwell especially disliked Mr. Crosbie,—disliked him because she knew that he snubbed her husband. “But it’s hard to refuse, when one man has known another for more than ten years.” Then he comforted himself somewhat with the reflection, that Crosbie would no doubt make himself more pleasant for the future than he had done lately, and with a second reflection, that Crosbie’s life was a good life,—and with a third, as to his own great goodness, in assisting a brother officer. Nevertheless, as he sat looking out of the omnibus-window, on his journey home to Putney, he was not altogether comfortable in his mind. Mrs. Butterwell was a very prudent woman.

But Crosbie was very comfortable in his mind on that afternoon. He had hardly dared to hope for success, but he had been successful. He had not even thought of Butterwell as a possible fountain of supply, till his mind had been brought back to the affairs of his office, by the voice of Sir Raffle Buffle at the corner of the street. The idea that his bill would be dishonoured, and that tidings of his insolvency would be conveyed to the Commissioners at his Board, had been dreadful to him. The way in which he had been treated by Musselboro and Dobbs Broughton had made him hate City men, and what he supposed to be City ways. Now there had come to him a relief which suddenly made everything feel light. He could almost think of Mr. Mortimer Gazebee without disgust. Perhaps after all there might be some happiness yet in store for him. Might it not be possible that Lily would yet accept him in spite of the chilling letter,—the freezing letter which he had received from Lily’s mother? Of one thing he was quite certain. If ever he had an opportunity of pleading his own cause with her, he certainly would tell her everything respecting his own money difficulties.

In that last resolve I think we may say that he was right. If Lily would ever listen to him again at all, she certainly would not be deterred from marrying him by his own story of his debts.

CHAPTER XLV

Lily Dale goes to London

ONE morning towards the end of March the squire rapped at the window of the drawing-room of the Small House, in which Mrs. Dale and her daughter were sitting. He had a letter in his hand, and both Lily and her mother knew that he had come down to speak about the contents of the letter. It was always a sign of good-humour on the squire's part, this rapping at the window. When it became necessary to him in his gloomy moods to see his sister-in-law, he would write a note to her, and she would go across to him at the Great House. At other times, if, as Lily would say, he was just then neither sweet nor bitter, he would go round to the front door and knock, and be admitted after the manner of ordinary people; but when he was minded to make himself thoroughly pleasant he would come and rap at the drawing-room window, as he was doing now.

"I'll let you in, uncle; wait a moment," said Lily, as she unbolted the window which opened out upon the lawn. "It's dreadfully cold, so come in as fast as you can."

"It's not cold at all," said the squire. "It's more like spring than any morning we've had yet. I've been sitting without a fire."

"You won't catch us without one for the next two months; will he, mamma? You have got a letter, uncle. Is it for us to see?"

"Well,—yes; I've brought it down to show you. Mary, what do you think is going to happen?"

A terrible idea occurred to Mrs. Dale at that moment, but she was much too wise to give it expression. Could it be possible that the squire was going to make a fool of himself and get married? "I am very bad at guessing," said Mrs. Dale. "You had better tell us."

"Bernard is going to be married," said Lily.

"How did you know?" said the squire.

"I didn't know. I only guessed."

"Then you've guessed right," said the squire, a little annoyed at having his news thus taken out of his mouth.

"I am so glad," said Mrs. Dale; "and I know from your manner that you like the match."

"Well,—yes. I don't know the young lady, but I think that upon the whole I do like it. It's quite time, you know, that he got married."

"He's not thirty yet," said Mrs. Dale.

"He will be, in a month or two."

"And who is it, uncle?"

"Well;—as you're so good at guessing, I suppose you can guess that?"

"It's not that Miss Partridge he used to talk about?"

"No; it's not Miss Partridge,—I'm glad to say. I don't believe that the Partridges have a shilling among them."

"Then I suppose it's an heiress?" said Mrs. Dale.

"No; not an heiress; but she will have some money of her own. And she has connexions in Barsetshire, which makes it pleasant."

"Connexions in Barsetshire! Who can it be?" said Lily.

"Her name is Emily Dunstable," said the squire, "and she is the niece of that Miss Dunstable who married Dr. Thorne and who lives at Challicotes."

"She was the woman who had millions upon millions," said Lily, "all got by selling ointment."

"Never mind how it was got," said the squire, angrily. "Miss Dunstable married most respectably, and has always made a most excellent use of her money."

"And will Bernard's wife have all her fortune?" asked Lily.

"She will have twenty thousand pounds the day she marries, and I suppose that will be all."

"And quite enough, too," said Mrs. Dale.

"It seems that old Dr. Dunstable, as he was called, who, as Lily says, sold the ointment, quarrelled with his son or

with his son's widow, and left nothing either to her or her child. The mother is dead, and the aunt, Dr. Thorne's wife, has always provided for the child. That's how it is, and Bernard is going to marry her. They are to be married at Chaldicotes in May."

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mrs. Dale.

"I've known Dr. Thorne for the last forty years;" and the squire now spoke in a low melancholy tone. "I've written to him to say that the young people shall have the old place up there to themselves if they like it."

"What! and turn you out?" said Mrs. Dale.

"That would not matter," said the squire.

"You'd have to come and live with us," said Lily, taking him by the hand.

"It doesn't matter much now where I live," said the squire.

"Bernard will never consent to that," said Mrs. Dale.

"I wonder whether she'll ask me to be a bridesmaid?" said Lily. "They say that Chaldicotes is such a pretty place, and I should see all the Barsetshire people that I've been hearing about from Grace. Poor Grace! I know that the Grantlys and the Thornes are very intimate. Fancy Bernard having twenty thousand pounds from the making of ointment!"

"What does it matter to you where it comes from?" said the squire, half in anger.

"Not in the least; only it sounds so odd. I do hope she's a nice girl."

Then the squire produced a photograph of Emily Dunstable which his nephew had sent to him, and they all pronounced her to be very pretty, to be very much like a lady, and to be very good-humoured. The squire was evidently pleased with the match, and therefore the ladies were pleased also. Bernard Dale was the heir to the estate, and his marriage was of course a matter of moment; and as on such properties as that of Allington money is always wanted, the squire may be forgiven for the great importance which

he attached to the young lady's fortune. "Bernard could hardly have married prudently without any money," he said,—"unless he had chosen to wait till I am gone."

"And then he would have been too old to marry at all," said Lily.

But the squire's budget of news had not yet been emptied. He told them soon afterwards that he himself had been summoned up to London. Bernard had written to him, begging him to come and see the young lady; and the family lawyer had written also, saying that his presence in town would be very desirable. "It is very troublesome, of course; but I shall go," said the squire. "It will do you all the good in the world," said Mrs. Dale; "and of course you ought to know her personally before the marriage." And then the squire made a clean breast of it and declared his full purpose. "I was thinking that, perhaps, Lily would not object to go up to London with me."

"Oh, uncle Christopher, I should so like it," said Lily.

"If your mamma does not object."

"Mamma never objects to anything. I should like to see her objecting to that!" And Lily shook her head at her mother.

"Bernard says that Miss Dunstable particularly wants to see you."

"Does she, indeed? And I particularly want to see Miss Dunstable. How nice! Mamma, I don't think I've ever been in London since I wore short frocks. Do you remember taking us to the pantomime? Only think how many years ago that is. I'm quite sure it's time that Bernard should get married. Uncle, I hope you're prepared to take me to the play."

"We must see about that!"

"And the opera, and Madame Tussaud, and the Horticultural Gardens, and the new conjuror who makes a woman lie upon nothing. The idea of my going to London! And then I suppose I shall be one of the bridesmaids. I declare a new vista of life is opening out to me! Mamma, you

mustn't be dull while I'm away. It won't be very long, I suppose, uncle?"

"About a month, probably," said the squire.

"Oh, mamma; what will you do?"

"Never mind me, Lily."

"You must get Bell and the children to come. But I cannot imagine living away from home a month. I was never away from home a month in my life."

And Lily did go up to town with her uncle, two days only having been allowed to her for her preparations. There was very much for her to think of in such a journey. It was not only that she would see Emily Dunstable who was to be her cousin's wife, and that she would go to the play and visit the new conjuror's entertainment, but that she would be in the same city both with Adolphus Crosbie and with John Eames. Not having personal experience of the wideness of London, and of the wilderness which it is; —of the distance which is set there between persons who are not purposely brought together—it seemed to her fancy as though for this month of her absence from home she would be brought into close contiguity with both her lovers. She had hitherto felt herself to be at any rate safe in her fortress at Allington. When Crosbie had written to her mother, making a renewed offer which had been rejected, Lily had felt that she certainly need not see him unless it pleased her to do so. He could hardly force himself upon her at Allington. And as to John Eames, though he would, of course, be welcome at Allington as often as he pleased to show himself, still there was a security in the place. She was so much at home there that she could always be mistress of the occasion. She knew that she could talk to him at Allington as though from ground higher than that on which he stood himself; but she felt that this would hardly be the case if she should chance to meet him in London. Crosbie probably would not come in her way. Crosbie she thought,—and she blushed for the man she loved, as the idea came across her mind,—would be afraid of

meeting her uncle. But John Eames would certainly find her; and she was led by the experience of latter days to imagine that John would never cross her path without renewing his attempts.

But she said no word of all this, even to her mother. She was contented to confine her outspoken expectations to Emily Dunstable, and the play, and the conjuror. "The chances are ten to one against my liking her, mamma," she said.

"I don't see that, my dear."

"I feel to be too old to think that I shall ever like any more new people. Three years ago I should have been quite sure that I should love a new cousin. It would have been like having a new dress. But I've come to think that an old dress is the most comfortable, and an old cousin certainly the best."

The squire had had taken for them a gloomy lodging in Sackville Street. Lodgings in London are always gloomy. Gloomy colours wear better than bright ones for curtains and carpets, and the keepers of lodgings in London seem to think that a certain dinginess of appearance is respectable. I never saw a London lodging in which any attempt at cheerfulness had been made, and I do not think that any such attempt, if made, would pay. The lodging-seeker would be frightened and dismayed, and would unconsciously be led to fancy that something was wrong. Ideas of burglars and improper persons would present themselves. This is so certainly the case that I doubt whether any well-conditioned lodging-house matron could be induced to show rooms that were prettily draped or pleasantly coloured. The big drawing-room and two large bedrooms which the squire took, were all that was proper, and were as brown, and as gloomy, and as ill-suited for the comforts of ordinary life as though they had been prepared for two prisoners. But Lily was not so ignorant as to expect cheerful lodgings in London, and was satisfied. "And what are we to do now?" said Lily, as soon as they found themselves

settled. It was still March, and whatever may have been the nature of the weather at Allington, it was very cold in London. They reached Sackville Street about five in the evening, and an hour was taken up in unpacking their trunks and making themselves as comfortable as their circumstances allowed. "And now what are we to do?" said Lily.

"I told them to have dinner for us at half-past six."

"And what after that? Won't Bernard come to us to-night? I expected him to be standing on the door-steps waiting for us with his bride in his hand."

"I don't suppose Bernard will be here to-night," said the squire. "He did not say that he would, and as for Miss Dunstable, I promised to take you to her aunt's house to-morrow."

"But I wanted to see her to-night. Well;—of course bridesmaids must wait upon brides. And ladies with twenty thousand pounds can't be expected to run about like common people. As for Bernard,—but Bernard never was in a hurry." Then they dined, and when the squire had very nearly fallen asleep over a bottle of port wine which had been sent in for him from some neighbouring public-house, Lily began to feel that it was very dull. And she looked round the room, and she thought that it was very ugly. And she calculated that thirty evenings so spent would seem to be very long. And she reflected that the hours were probably going much more quickly with Emily Dunstable, who, no doubt, at this moment had Bernard Dale by her side. And then she told herself that the hours were not tedious with her at home, while sitting with her mother, with all her daily occupations within her reach. But in so telling herself she took herself to task, inquiring of herself whether such an assurance was altogether true. Were not the hours sometimes tedious even at home? And in this way her mind wandered off to thoughts upon life in general, and she repeated to herself over and over again the two words which she had told John Eames that she

would write in her journal. The reader will remember those two words;—Old Maid. And she had written them in her book, making each letter a capital, and round them she had drawn a scroll, ornamented after her own fashion, and she had added the date in quaintly formed figures,—for in such matters Lily had some little skill and a dash of fun to direct it; and she had inscribed below it an Italian motto,—“Who goes softly, goes safely;” and above her work of art she had put a heading—“As arranged by Fate for L.D.” Now she thought of all this, and reflected whether Emily Dunstable was in truth very happy. Presently the tears came into her eyes, and she got up and went to the window, as though she were afraid that her uncle might wake and see them. And as she looked out on the blank street, she muttered a word or two—“Dear mother! Dearest mother!” Then the door was opened, and her cousin Bernard announced himself. She had not heard his knock at the door as she had been thinking of the two words in her book.

“What; Bernard!—ah, yes, of course,” said the squire, rubbing his eyes as he strove to wake himself. “I wasn’t sure you would come, but I’m delighted to see you. I wish you joy with all my heart,—with all my heart.”

“Of course, I should come,” said Bernard. “Dear Lily, this is so good of you. Emily is so delighted.” Then Lily spoke her congratulations warmly, and there was no trace of a tear in her eyes, and she was thoroughly happy as she sat by her cousin’s side and listened to his raptures about Emily Dunstable. “And you will be so fond of her aunt,” he said.

“But is she not awfully rich?” said Lily.

“Frightfully rich,” said Bernard; “but really you would hardly find it out if nobody told you. Of course she lives in a big house, and has a heap of servants; but she can’t help that.”

“I hate a heap of servants,” said Lily.

Then there came another knock at the door, and who

should enter the room but John Eames. Lily for a moment was taken aback, but it was only for a moment. She had been thinking so much of him that his presence disturbed her for an instant. "He probably will not know that I am here," she had said to herself; but she had not yet been three hours in London, and he was already with her! At first he hardly spoke to her, addressing himself to the squire. "Lady Julia told me you were to be here, and as I start for the Continent early to-morrow morning, I thought you would let me come and see you before I went."

"I'm always glad to see you, John," said the squire,— "very glad. And so you're going abroad, are you?"

Then Johnny congratulated his old acquaintance, Bernard Dale, as to his coming marriage, and explained to them how Lady Julia in one of her letters had told him all about it, and had even given him the number in Sackville Street. "I suppose she learned it from you, Lily," said the squire. "Yes, uncle, she did." And then there came questions as to John's projected journey to the Continent, and he explained that he was going on law-business, on behalf of Mr. Crawley, to catch the dean and Mrs. Arabin, if it might be possible. "You see, sir, Mr. Toogood, who is Mr. Crawley's cousin, and also his lawyer, is my cousin, too; and that's why I'm going." And still there had been hardly a word spoken between him and Lily.

"But you're not a lawyer, John; are you?" said the squire.

"No. I'm not a lawyer myself."

"Nor a lawyer's clerk."

"Certainly not a lawyer's clerk," said Johnny, laughing.

"Then why should you go?" asked Bernard Dale.

Then Johnny had to explain; and in doing so he became very eloquent as to the hardships of Mr. Crawley's case. "You see, sir, nobody can possibly believe that such a man as that stole twenty pounds."

"I do not for one," said Lily.

"God forbid that I should say he did," said the squire.

"I'm quite sure he didn't," said Johnny, warming to his

subject. "It couldn't be that such a man as that should become a thief all at once. It's not human nature, sir; is it?"

"It is very hard to know what is human nature," said the squire.

"It's the general opinion down in Barsetshire that he did steal it," said Bernard. "Dr. Thorne was one of the magistrates who committed him, and I know he thinks so."

"I don't blame the magistrates in the least," said Johnny.

"That's kind of you," said the squire.

"Of course you'll laugh at me, sir; but you'll see that we shall come out right. There's some mystery in it of which we haven't got at the bottom as yet; and if there is anybody that can help us it's the dean."

"If the dean knows anything, why has he not written and told what he knows?" said the squire.

"That's what I can't say. The dean has not had an opportunity of writing since he heard,—even if he has yet heard,—that Mr. Crawley is to be tried. And then he and Mrs. Arabin are not together. It's a long story, and I will not trouble you with it all; but at any rate I'm going off to-morrow. Lily, can I do anything for you in Florence?"

"In Florence?" said Lily; "and are you really going to Florence? How I envy you."

"And who pays your expenses?" said the squire.

"Well;—as to my expenses, they are to be paid by a person who won't raise any unpleasant questions about the amount."

"I don't know what you mean," said the squire.

"He means himself," said Lily.

"Is he going to do it out of his own pocket?"

"He is," said Lily, looking at her lover.

"I'm going to have a trip for my own fun," said Johnny, "and I shall pick up evidence on the road, as I'm going;—that's all."

Then Lily began to take an active part in the conversation, and a great deal was said about Mr. Crawley, and about Grace, and Lily declared that she would be very

anxious to hear any news which John Eames might be able to send. "You know, John, how fond we are of your cousin Grace, at Allington? Are we not, uncle?"

"Yes, indeed," said the squire. "I thought her a very nice girl."

"If you should be able to learn anything that may be of use, John, how happy you will be."

"Yes, I shall," said Johnny.

"And I think it so good of you to go, John. But it is just like you. You were always generous." Soon after that he got up and went. It was very clear to him that he would have no moment in which to say a word alone to Lily; and if he could find such a moment, what good would such a word do him? It was as yet but a few weeks since she had positively refused him. And he too remembered very well those two words which she had told him that she would write in her book. As he had been coming to the house he had told himself that his coming would be,—could be of no use. And yet he was disappointed with the result of his visit, although she had spoken to him so sweetly.

"I suppose you'll be gone when I come back?" he said.

"We shall be here a month," said the squire.

"I shall be back long before that, I hope," said Johnny. "Good-by, sir. Good-by, Dale. Good-by, Lily." And he put out his hand to her.

"Good-by, John." And then she added, almost in a whisper, "I think you are very, very right to go." How could he fail after that to hope as he walked home that she might still relent. And she also thought much of him, but her thoughts of him made her cling more firmly than ever to the two words. She could not bring herself to marry him; but, at least, she would not break his heart by becoming the wife of any one else. Soon after this Bernard Dale went also. I am not sure that he had been well pleased at seeing John Eames become suddenly the hero of the hour. When a young man is going to perform so important an act as that of marriage, he is apt to think that he ought

to be the hero of the hour himself—at any rate among his own family.

Early on the next morning Lily was taken by her uncle to call upon Mrs. Thorne, and to see Emily Dunstable. Bernard was to meet them there, but it had been arranged that they should reach the house first. "There is nothing so absurd as these introductions," Bernard had said. "You go and look at her, and when you've had time to look at her, then I'll come!" So the squire and Lily went off to look at Emily Dunstable.

"You don't mean to say that she lives in that house?" said Lily, when the cab was stopped before an enormous mansion in one of the most fashionable of the London squares.

"I believe she does," said the squire.

"I never shall be able to speak to anybody living in such a house as that," said Lily. "A duke couldn't have anything grander."

"Mrs. Thorne is richer than half the dukes," said the squire. Then the door was opened by a porter, and Lily found herself within the hall. Everything was very great, and very magnificent, and, as she thought, very uncomfortable. Presently she heard a loud jovial voice on the stairs. "Mr. Dale, I'm delighted to see you. And this is your niece Lily. Come up, my dear. There is a young woman upstairs, dying to embrace you. Never mind the umbrella. Put it down anywhere. I want to have a look at you, because Bernard swears that you're so pretty." This was Mrs. Thorne, once Miss Dunstable, the richest woman in England, and the aunt of Bernard's bride. The reader may perhaps remember the advice which she once gave to Major Grantly, and her enthusiasm on that occasion. "There she is, Mr. Dale; what do you think of her?" said Mrs. Thorne, as she opened the door of a small sitting-room wedged in between two large saloons, in which Emily Dunstable was sitting.

"Aunt Martha, how can you be so ridiculous?" said the young lady.

"I suppose it is ridiculous to ask the question to which one really wants to have an answer," said Mrs. Thorne. "But Mr. Dale has, in truth, come to inspect you, and to form an opinion; and, in honest truth, I shall be very anxious to know what he thinks,—though, of course, he won't tell me."

The old man took the girl in his arms, and kissed her on both cheeks. "I have no doubt you'll find out what I think," he said, "though I should never tell you."

"I generally do find out what people think," she said. "And so you're Lily Dale?"

"Yes, I'm Lily Dale."

"I have so often heard of you, particularly of late; for you must know that a certain Major Grantly is a friend of mine. We must take care that that affair comes off all right, must we not?"

"I hope it will." Then Lily turned to Emily Dunstable, and, taking her hand, went up and sat beside her, while Mrs. Thorne and the squire talked of the coming marriage. "How long have you been engaged?" said Lily.

"Really engaged, about three weeks. I think it is not more than three weeks ago."

"How very discreet Bernard has been. He never told us a word about it while it was going on."

"Men never do tell, I suppose," said Emily Dunstable.

"Of course you love him very dearly?" said Lily, not knowing what else to say.

"Of course I do."

"So do we. You know he's almost a brother to us; that is, to me and my sister. We never had a brother of our own." And so the morning was passed till Lily was told by her uncle to come away, and was told also by Mrs. Thorne that she was to dine with them in the square on that day. "You must not be surprised that my husband is not here," she said. "He is a very odd sort of man, and he never comes to London if he can help it."

CHAPTER XLVI

The Bayswater Romance

AMES had by no means done his work for that evening when he left Mr. Dale and Lily at their lodgings. He had other business on hand to which he had promised to give attention, and another person to see who would welcome his coming quite as warmly, though by no means as pleasantly, as Lily Dale. It was then just nine o'clock, and as he had told Miss Demolines,—Madalina we may as well call her now,—that he would be in Porchester Terrace by nine at the latest, it was incumbent on him to make haste. He got into a cab, and bid the cabman drive hard, and lighting a cigar, began to inquire of himself whether it was well for him to hurry away from the presence of Lily Dale to that of Madalina Demolines. He felt that he was half-ashamed of what he was doing. Though he declared to himself over and over again that he never had said a word, and never intended to say a word, to Madalina, which all the world might not hear, yet he knew that he was doing amiss. He was doing amiss, and half repented it, and yet he was half proud of it. He was most anxious to be able to give himself credit for his constancy to Lily Dale; to be able to feel that he was steadfast in his passion; and yet he liked the idea of amusing himself with his Bayswater romance, as he would call it, and was not without something of conceit as he thought of the progress he had made in it. "Love is one thing and amusement is another," he said to himself as he puffed the cigar-smoke out of his mouth; and in his heart he was proud of his own capacity for enjoyment. He thought it a fine thing, although at the same moment he knew it to be an evil thing—this hurrying away from the young lady whom he really loved to another as to whom he thought it very likely that he should be called upon to pretend to love her. And he sang a little song as he went, "If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be." That was intended to apply to



Lily, and was used as an excuse for his fickleness in going to Miss Demolines. And he was, perhaps, too, a little conceited as to his mission to the Continent. Lily had told him that she was very glad that he was going; that she thought him very right to go. The words had been pleasant to his ears, and Lily had never looked prettier in his eyes than when she had spoken them. Johnny, therefore, was rather proud of himself as he sat in the cab smoking his cigar. He had, moreover, beaten his old enemy Sir Raffle Buffle in another contest, and he felt that the world was smiling on him;—that the world was smiling on him in spite of his cruel fate in the matter of his real lovesuit.

There was a mystery about the Bayswater romance which was not without its allurement, and a portion of the mystery was connected with Madalina's mother. Lady Demolines was very rarely seen, and John Eames could not quite understand what was the manner of life of that unfortunate lady. Her daughter usually spoke of her with affectionate regret as being unable to appear on that particular occasion on account of some passing malady. She was suffering from a nervous headache, or was afflicted with bronchitis, or had been touched with rheumatism, so that she was seldom on the scene when Johnny was passing his time at Porchester Terrace. And yet he heard of her dining out, and going to plays and operas; and when he did chance to see her, he found that she was a sprightly old woman enough. I will not venture to say that he much regretted the absence of Lady Demolines, or that he was keenly alive to the impropriety of being left alone with the gentle Madalina; but the customary absence of the elder lady was an incident in the romance which did not fail to strike him.

Madalina was alone when he was shown up into the drawing-room on the evening of which we are speaking.

"Mr. Eames," she said, "will you kindly look at that watch which is lying on the table." She looked full at him with her great eyes wide open, and the tone of her voice was intended to show him that she was aggrieved.

"Yes, I see it," said John, looking down on Miss Demo-

lines' little gold Geneva watch, with which he had already made sufficient acquaintance to know that it was worth nothing. "Shall I give it you?"

"No, Mr. Eames; let it remain there, that it may remind me, if it does not remind you, by how long a time you have broken your word."

"Upon my word I couldn't help it;—upon my honour I couldn't."

"Upon your honour, Mr. Eames!"

"I was obliged to go and see a friend who has just come to town from my part of the country."

"That is the friend, I suppose, of whom I have heard from Maria." It is to be feared that Conway Dalrymple had not been so guarded as he should have been in some of his conversations with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, and that a word or two had escaped from him as to the love of John Eames for Lily Dale.

"I don't know what you may have heard," said Johnny, "but I was obliged to see these people before I left town. There is going to be a marriage and all that sort of thing."

"Who is going to be married?"

"One Captain Dale is going to be married to one Miss Dunstable."

"Oh! And as to one Miss Lily Dale,—is she to be married to anybody?"

"Not that I have heard of," said Johnny.

"She is not going to become the wife of one Mr. John Eames?"

He did not wish to talk to Miss Demolines about Lily Dale. He did not choose to disown the imputation, or to acknowledge its truth.

"Silence gives consent," she said. "If it be so, I congratulate you. I have no doubt she is a most charming young woman. It is about seven years, I believe, since that little affair with Mr. Crosbie, and therefore that, I suppose, may be considered as forgotten."

"It is only three years," said Johnny, angrily. "Besides, I don't know what that has to do with it."

"You need not be ashamed," said Madalina. "I have heard how well you behaved on that occasion. You were quite the preux chevalier; and if any gentleman ever deserved well of a lady you deserved well of her. I wonder how Mr. Crosbie felt when he met you the other day at Maria's. I had not heard anything about it then, or I should have been much more interested in watching your meeting."

"I really can't say how he felt."

"I daresay not; but I saw him shake hands with you. And so Lily Dale has come to town?"

"Yes,—Miss Dale is here with her uncle."

"And you are going away to-morrow?"

"Yes,—and I am going away to-morrow."

After that there was a pause in the conversation. Eames was sick of it, and was very anxious to change the conversation. Miss Demolines was sitting in the shadow, away from the light, with her face half hidden by her hands. At last she jumped up, and came round and stood opposite to him. "I charge you to tell me truly, John Eames," she said, "whether Miss Lilian Dale is engaged to you as your future wife?" He looked up into her face, but made no immediate answer. Then she repeated her demand. "I ask you whether you are engaged to marry Miss Lilian Dale, and I expect a reply."

"What makes you ask me such a question as that?"

"What makes me ask you? Do you deny my right to feel so much interest in you as to desire to know whether you are about to be married? Of course you can decline to tell me if you choose."

"And if I were to decline?"

"I should know then that it was true, and I should think that you were a coward."

"I don't see any cowardice in the matter. One does not talk about that kind of thing to everybody."

"Upon my word, Mr. Eames, you are complimentary;—

indeed you are. To everybody! I am everybody,—am I? That is your idea of—friendship! You may be sure that after that I shall ask no further questions."

"I didn't mean it in the way you've taken it, Madalina."

"In what way did you mean it, sir? Everybody! Mr. Eames, you must excuse me if I say that I am not well enough this evening to bear the company of—everybody. I think you had better leave me. I think that you had better go."

"Are you angry with me?"

"Yes, I am,—very angry. Because I have condescended to feel an interest in your welfare, and have asked you a question which I thought that our intimacy justified, you tell me that that is a kind of thing that you will not talk about to—everybody. I beg you to understand that I will not be your everybody. Mr. Eames, there is the door."

Things had now become very serious. Hitherto Johnny had been seated comfortably in the corner of a sofa, and had not found himself bound to move, though Miss Demolines was standing before him. But now it was absolutely necessary that he should do something. He must either go, or else he must make entreaty to be allowed to remain. Would it not be expedient that he should take the lady at her word and escape? She was still pointing to the door, and the way was open to him. If he were to walk out now of course he would never return, and there would be the end of the Bayswater romance. If he remained it might be that the romance would become troublesome. He got up from his seat, and had almost resolved that he would go. Had she not somewhat relaxed the majesty of her anger as he rose, had the fire of her eye not been somewhat quenched and the lines of her mouth softened, I think that he would have gone. The romance would have been over, and he would have felt that it had come to an inglorious end; but it would have been well for him that he should have gone. Though the fire was somewhat quenched and the lines were somewhat softened, she was still pointing to the door.

“Do you mean it?” he said.

“I do mean it,—certainly.”

“And this is to be the end of everything?”

“I do not know what you mean by everything. It is a very little everything to you, I should say. I do not quite understand your everything and your everybody.”

“I will go, if you wish me to go, of course.”

“I do wish it.”

“But before I go, you must permit me to excuse myself. I did not intend to offend you. I merely meant——”

“You merely meant! Give me an honest answer to a downright question. Are you engaged to Miss Lilian Dale?”

“No;—I am not.”

“Upon your honour?”

“Do you think that I would tell you a falsehood about it? What I meant was that it is a kind of thing one doesn’t like talking about, merely because stories are bandied about. People are so fond of saying that this man is engaged to that woman, and of making up tales; and it seems to be so foolish to contradict such things.”

“But you know that you used to be very fond of her?”

He had taken up his hat when he had risen from the sofa, and was still standing with it ready in his hand. He was even now half-minded to escape; and the name of Lily Dale in Miss Demolines’ mouth was so distasteful to him that he would have done so,—he would have gone in sheer disgust, had she not stood in his way, so that he could not escape without moving her, or going round behind the sofa. She did not stir to make way for him, and it may be that she understood that he was her prisoner, in spite of her late command to him to go. It may be, also, that she understood his vexation and the cause of it, and that she saw the expediency of leaving Lily Dale alone for the present. At any rate, she pressed him no more upon the matter. “Are we to be friends again?” she said.

“I hope so,” replied Johnny.

"There is my hand, then." So Johnny took her hand and pressed it, and held it a little while,—just long enough to seem to give a meaning to the action. "You will get to understand me some day," she said, "and will learn that I do not like to be reckoned among the everybodies by those for whom I really—really—really have a regard. When I am angry, I am angry."

"You were very angry just now, when you showed me the way to the door."

"And I meant it too,—for the minute. Only think,—supposing you had gone! We should never have seen each other again;—never, never! What a change one word may make!"

"One word often does make a change."

"Does it not? Just a little 'yes,' or 'no.' A 'no' is said when a 'yes' is meant, and then there comes no second chance, and what a change that may be from bright hopes to desolation! Or, worse again, a 'yes' is said when a 'no' should be said,—when the speaker knows that it should be 'no.' What a difference that 'no' makes! When one thinks of it, one wonders that a woman should ever say anything but 'no.'"

"They never did say anything else to me," said Johnny.

"I don't believe it. I daresay the truth is, you never asked anybody."

"Did anybody ever ask you?"

"What would you give to know? But I will tell you frankly;—yes. And once,—once I thought that my answer would not have been a 'no.'"

"But you changed your mind?"

"When the moment came I could not bring myself to say the word that should rob me of my liberty for ever. I had said 'no' to him often enough before,—poor fellow; and on this occasion he told me that he asked for the last time. 'I shall not give myself another chance,' he said, 'for I shall be on board ship within a week.' I merely bade him good-by. It was the only answer I gave him. He under-

stood me, and since that day his foot has never pressed his native soil."

"And was it all because you are so fond of your liberty?" said Johnny.

"Perhaps,—I did not—love him," said Miss Demolines, thoughtfully. She was now again seated in her chair, and John Eames had gone back to his corner of the sofa. "If I had really loved him I suppose it would have been otherwise. He was a gallant fellow, and had two thousand a year of his own, in India stock and other securities."

"Dear me! And he has not married yet?"

"He wrote me word to say that he would never marry till I was married,—but that on the day that he should hear of my wedding, he would go to the first single woman near him and propose. It was a droll thing to say; was it not?"

"The single woman ought to feel herself flattered."

"He would find plenty to accept him. Besides being so well off he was a very handsome fellow, and is connected with people of title. He had everything to recommend him."

"And yet you refused him so often?"

"Yes. You think I was foolish;—do you not?"

"I don't think you were at all foolish if you didn't care for him."

"It was my destiny, I suppose; I daresay I was wrong. Other girls marry without violent love, and do very well afterwards. Look at Maria Clutterbuck."

The name of Maria Clutterbuck had become odious to John Eames. As long as Miss Demolines would continue to talk about herself he could listen with some amount of gratification. Conversation on that subject was the natural progress of the Bayswater romance. And if Madalina would only call her friend by her present name, he had no strong objection to an occasional mention of the lady; but the combined names of Maria Clutterbuck had come to be absolutely distasteful to him. He did not believe in the

Maria Clutterbuck friendship,—either in its past or present existence, as described by Madalina. Indeed, he did not put strong faith in anything that Madalina said to him. In the handsome gentleman with two thousand a year, he did not believe at all. But the handsome gentleman had only been mentioned once in the course of his acquaintance with Miss Demolines, whereas Maria Clutterbuck had come up so often! “Upon my word, I must wish you good-by,” he said. “It is going on for eleven o’clock, and I have to start to-morrow at seven.”

“What difference does that make?”

“A fellow wants to get a little sleep, you know.”

“Go then;—go and get your sleep. What a sleepy-headed generation it is.” Johnny longed to ask her whether the last generation was less sleepy-headed, and whether the gentleman with two thousand a year had sat up talking all night before he pressed his foot for the last time on his native soil; but he did not dare. As he said to himself afterwards, “It would not do to bring the Bayswater romance too suddenly to its termination!” “But before you go,” she continued, “I must say the word to you about that picture. Did you speak to Mr. Dalrymple?”

“I did not. I have been so busy with different things that I have not seen him.”

“And now you are going?”

“Well,—to tell the truth, I think I shall see him to-night, in spite of my being so sleepy-headed. I wrote him a line that I would look in and smoke a cigar with him if he chanced to be at home!”

“And that is why you want to go. A gentleman cannot live without his cigar now.”

“It is especially at your bidding that I am going to see him.”

“Go, then,—and make your friend understand that if he continues this picture of his, he will bring himself to great trouble, and will probably ruin the woman for whom he professes, I presume, to feel something like friendship. You may tell him that Mrs. Van Siever has already heard of it.”

“Who told her?” demanded Johnny.

“Never mind. You need not look at me like that. It was not I. Do you suppose that secrets can be kept when so many people know them? Every servant in Maria’s house knows all about it.”

“As for that, I don’t suppose Mrs. Broughton makes any great secret of it.”

“Do you think she has told Mr. Broughton? I am sure she has not. I may say I know she has not. Maria Clutterbuck is infatuated. There is no other excuse to be made for her.”

“Good-by,” said Johnny, hurriedly.

“And you really are going?”

“Well,—yes. I suppose so.”

“Go then. I have nothing more to say to you.”

“I shall come and call directly I return,” said Johnny.

“You may do as you please about that, sir.”

“Do you mean that you won’t be glad to see me again?”

“I am not going to flatter you, Mr. Eames. Mamma will be well by that time, I hope, and I do not mind telling you that you are a favourite with her.” Johnny thought that this was particularly kind, as he had seen so very little of the old lady. “If you choose to call upon her,” said Madalina, “of course she will be glad to see you.”

“But I was speaking of yourself, you know?” and Johnny permitted himself for a moment to look tenderly at her.

“Then from myself pray understand that I will say nothing to flatter your self-love.”

“I thought you would be kinder just when I was going away.”

“I think I have been quite kind enough. As you observed yourself just now, it is nearly eleven o’clock, and I must ask you to go away. Bon voyage, and a happy return to you.”

“And you will be glad to see me when I am back? Tell me that you will be glad to see me.”

“I will tell you nothing of the kind. Mr. Eames, if you do, I will be very angry with you.” And then he went.

On his way back to his own lodgings he did call on

Conway Dalrymple, and in spite of his need for early rising, sat smoking with the artist for an hour. "If you don't take care, young man," said his friend, "you will find yourself in a scrape with your Madalina."

"What sort of a scrape?"

"As you walk away from Porchester Terrace some fine day, you will have to congratulate yourself on having made a successful overture towards matrimony."

"You don't think I am such a fool as that comes to?"

"Other men as wise as you have done the same sort of thing. Miss Demolines is very clever, and I daresay you find it amusing."

"It isn't so much that she's clever, and I can hardly say that it is amusing. One gets awfully tired of it, you know. But a fellow must have something to do, and that is as good as anything else."

"I suppose you have not heard that one young man levanted last year to save himself from a breach of promise case?"

"I wonder whether he had any money in Indian securities?"

"What makes you ask that?"

"Nothing particular."

"Whatever little he had he chose to save, and I think I heard that he went to Canada. His name was Shorter; and they say that, on the eve of his going, Madalina sent him word that she had no objection to the colonies, and that, under the pressing emergency of his expatriation, she was willing to become Mrs. Shorter with more expedition than usually attends fashionable weddings. Shorter, however, escaped, and has never been seen back again."

Eames declared that he did not believe a word of it. Nevertheless, as he walked home he came to the conclusion that Mr. Shorter must have been the handsome gentleman with Indian securities, to whom "no" had been said once too often.

While sitting with Conway Dalrymple, he had forgotten to say a word about Jael and Sisera.

CHAPTER XLVII

Dr. Tempest at the Palace

INTIMATION had been sent from the palace to Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge of the bishop's intention that a commission should be held by him, as rural dean, with other neighbouring clergymen, as assessors with him, that inquiry might be made on the part of the Church into the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt. It must be understood that by this time the opinion had become very general that Mr. Crawley had been guilty,—that he had found the cheque in his house, and that he had, after holding it for many months, succumbed to temptation, and applied it to his own purposes. But various excuses were made for him by those who so believed. In the first place it was felt by all who really knew anything of the man's character, that the very fact of his committing such a crime proved him to be hardly responsible for his actions. He must have known, had not all judgment in such matters been taken from him, that the cheque would certainly be traced back to his hands. No attempt had been made in the disposing of it to dispose of it in such a way that the trace should be obliterated. He had simply given it to a neighbour with a direction to have it cashed, and had written his own name on the back of it. And therefore, though there could be no doubt as to the theft in the mind of those who supposed that he had found the cheque in his own house, yet the guilt of the theft seemed to be almost annihilated by the folly of the thief. And then his poverty, and his struggles, and the sufferings of his wife, were remembered; and stories were told from mouth to mouth of his industry in his profession, of his great zeal among those brickmakers of Hoggle End, of acts of charity done by him which startled the people of the district into admiration;—how he had worked with his own hands for the sick poor to whom he could not give relief in money, turning a woman's mangle for a couple of hours, and carrying a boy's load

along the lanes. Dr. Tempest and others declared that he had derogated from the dignity of his position as an English parish clergyman by such acts; but, nevertheless, the stories of these deeds acted strongly on the minds of both men and women, creating an admiration for Mr. Crawley which was much stronger than the condemnation of his guilt.

Even Mrs. Walker and her daughter, and the Miss Prettymans, had so far given way that they had ceased to asseverate their belief in Mr. Crawley's innocence. They contented themselves now with simply expressing a hope that he would be acquitted by a jury, and that when he should be so acquitted the thing might be allowed to rest. If he had sinned, no doubt he had repented. And then there were serious debates whether he might not have stolen the money without much sin, being mad or half-mad,—touched with madness when he took it; and whether he might not, in spite of such temporary touch of madness, be well fitted for his parish duties. Sorrow had afflicted him grievously; but that sorrow, though it had incapacitated him for the management of his own affairs, had not rendered him unfit for the ministrations of his parish. Such were the arguments now used in his favour by the women around him; and the men were not keen to contradict them. The wish that he should be acquitted and allowed to remain in his parsonage was very general.

When therefore it became known that the bishop had decided to put on foot another investigation, with the view of bringing Mr. Crawley's conduct under ecclesiastical condemnation, almost everybody accused the bishop of persecution. The world of the diocese declared that Mrs. Proudie was at work, and that the bishop himself was no better than a puppet. It was in vain that certain clear-headed men among the clergy, of whom Dr. Tempest himself was one, pointed out that the bishop after all might perhaps be right;—that if Mr. Crawley were guilty, and if he should be found to have been so by a jury, it might be

absolutely necessary that an ecclesiastical court should take some cognizance of the crime beyond that taken by the civil law. "The jury," said Dr. Tempest, discussing the case with Mr. Robarts and other clerical neighbours,— "the jury may probably find him guilty and recommend him to mercy. The judge will have heard his character, and will have been made acquainted with his manner of life, and will deal as lightly with the case as the law will allow him. For aught I know he may be imprisoned for a month. I wish it might be for no more than a day,—or an hour. But when he comes out from his month's imprisonment,— how then? Surely it should be a case for ecclesiastical inquiry, whether a clergyman who has committed a theft should be allowed to go into his pulpit directly he comes out of prison?" But the answer to this was that Mr. Crawley always had been a good clergyman, was a good clergyman at this moment, and would be a good clergyman when he did come out of prison.

But Dr. Tempest, though he had argued in this way, was by no means eager for the commencement of the commission over which he was to be called upon to preside. In spite of such arguments as the above, which came from the man's head when his head was brought to bear upon the matter, there was a thorough desire within his heart to oppose the bishop. He had no strong sympathy with Mr. Crawley, as had others. He would have had Mr. Crawley silenced without regret, presuming Mr. Crawley to have been guilty. But he had a much stronger feeling with regard to the bishop. Had there been any question of silencing the bishop,—could it have been possible to take any steps in that direction,—he would have been very active. It may therefore be understood that in spite of his defence of the bishop's present proceedings as to the commission, he was anxious that the bishop should fail, and anxious to put impediments in the bishop's way, should it appear to him that he could do so with justice. Dr. Tempest was well known among his parishioners to be hard and unsympa-

thetic, some said unfeeling also, and cruel; but it was admitted by those who disliked him the most that he was both practical and just, and that he cared for the welfare of many, though he was rarely touched by the misery of one. Such was the man who was rector of Silverbridge and rural dean in the district, and who was now called upon by the bishop to assist him in making further inquiry as to this wretched cheque for twenty pounds.

Once at this period Archdeacon Grantly and Dr. Tempest met each other and discussed the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt. Both these men were inimical to the present bishop of the diocese, and both had perhaps respected the old bishop beyond all other men. But they were different in this, that the archdeacon hated Dr. Proudie as a partisan,—whereas Dr. Tempest opposed the bishop on certain principles which he endeavoured to make clear, at any rate to himself. "Wrong!" said the archdeacon, speaking of the bishop's intention of issuing a commission—"of course he is wrong. How could anything right come from him or from her? I should be sorry to have to do his bidding."

"I think you are a little hard upon Bishop Proudie," said Dr. Tempest.

"One cannot be hard upon him," said the archdeacon. "He is so scandalously weak, and she is so radically vicious, that they cannot but be wrong together. The very fact that such a man should be a bishop among us is to me terribly strong evidence of evil days coming."

"You are more impulsive than I am," said Dr. Tempest. "In this case I am sorry for the poor man, who is, I am sure, honest in the main. But I believe that in such a case your father would have done just what the present bishop is doing;—that he could have done nothing else; and as I think that Dr. Proudie is right I shall do all that I can to assist him in the commission."

The bishop's secretary had written to Dr. Tempest, telling him of the bishop's purpose; and now, in one of the

last days of March, the bishop himself wrote to Dr. Tempest, asking him to come over to the palace. The letter was worded most courteously, and expressed very feelingly the great regret which the writer felt at being obliged to take these proceedings against a clergyman in his diocese. Bishop Proudie knew how to write such a letter. By the writing of such letters, and by the making of speeches in the same strain, he had become Bishop of Barchester. Now, in this letter, he begged Dr. Tempest to come over to him, saying how delighted Mrs. Proudie would be to see him at the palace. Then he went on to explain the great difficulty which he felt, and great sorrow also, in dealing with this matter of Mr. Crawley. He looked, therefore, confidently for Dr. Tempest's assistance. Thinking to do the best for Mr. Crawley, and anxious to enable Mr. Crawley to remain in quiet retirement till the trial should be over, he had sent a clergyman over to Hogglestock, who would have relieved Mr. Crawley from the burden of the church-services;—but Mr. Crawley would have none of this relief. Mr. Crawley had been obstinate and overbearing, and had persisted in claiming his right to his own pulpit. Therefore was the bishop obliged to interfere legally, and therefore was he under the necessity of asking Dr. Tempest to assist him. Would Dr. Tempest come over on the Monday, and stay till the Wednesday?

The letter was a very good letter, and Dr. Tempest was obliged to do as he was asked. He so far modified the bishop's proposition that he reduced the sojourn at the palace by one night. He wrote to say that he would have the pleasure of dining with the bishop and Mrs. Proudie on the Monday, but would return home on the Tuesday, as soon as the business in hand would permit him. "I shall get on very well with him," he said to his wife before he started; "but I am afraid of the woman. If she interferes, there will be a row." "Then, my dear," said his wife, "there will be a row, for I am told that she always interferes." On reaching the palace about half-an-hour before dinner-time,

Dr. Tempest found that other guests were expected, and on descending to the great yellow drawing-room, which was used only on state occasions, he encountered Mrs. Proudie and two of her daughters arrayed in a full panoply of female armour. She received him with her sweetest smiles, and if there had been any former enmity between Silverbridge and the palace, it was now all forgotten. She regretted greatly that Mrs. Tempest had not accompanied the doctor;—for Mrs. Tempest also had been invited. But Mrs. Tempest was not quite as well as she might have been, the doctor had said, and very rarely slept away from home. And then the bishop came in and greeted his guest with his pleasantest good-humour. It was quite a sorrow to him that Silverbridge was so distant, and that he saw so little of Dr. Tempest; but he hoped that that might be somewhat mended now, and that leisure might be found for social delights;—to all which Dr. Tempest said but little, bowing to the bishop at each separate expression of his lordship's kindness.

There were guests there that evening who did not often sit at the bishop's table. The archdeacon and Mrs. Grantly had been summoned from Plumstead, and had obeyed the summons. Great as was the enmity between the bishop and the archdeacon, it had never quite taken the form of open palpable hostility. Each, therefore, asked the other to dinner perhaps once every year; and each went to the other, perhaps, once in two years. And Dr. Thorne from Chaldicotes was there, but without his wife, who in these days was up in London. Mrs. Proudie always expressed a warm friendship for Mrs. Thorne, and on this occasion loudly regretted her absence. "You must tell her, Dr. Thorne, how exceedingly much we miss her." Dr. Thorne, who was accustomed to hear his wife speak of her dear friend Mrs. Proudie with almost unmeasured ridicule, promised that he would do so. "We are so sorry the Luftons couldn't come to us," said Mrs. Proudie,—not alluding to the dowager, of whom it was well known that no earthly induce-

ment would have sufficed to make her put her foot within Mrs. Proudie's room;—"but one of the children is ill, and she could not leave him." But the Greshams were there from Boxall Hill, and the Thornes from Ullathorne, and, with the exception of a single chaplain, who pretended to carve, Dr. Tempest and the archdeacon were the only clerical guests at the table. From all which Dr. Tempest knew that the bishop was anxious to treat him with special consideration on the present occasion.

The dinner was rather long and ponderous, and occasionally almost dull. The archdeacon talked a good deal, but a bystander with an acute ear might have understood from the tone of his voice that he was not talking as he would have talked among friends. Mrs. Proudie felt this, and understood it, and was angry. She could never find herself in the presence of the archdeacon without becoming angry. Her accurate ear would always appreciate the defiance of episcopal authority, as now existing in Barchester, which was concealed, or only half concealed, by all the archdeacon's words. But the bishop was not so keen, nor so easily roused to wrath; and though the presence of his enemy did to a certain degree cow him, he strove to fight against the feeling with renewed good-humour.

"You have improved so upon the old days," said the archdeacon, speaking of some small matter with reference to the cathedral, "that one hardly knows the old place."

"I hope we have not fallen off," said the bishop, with a smile.

"We have improved, Dr. Grantly," said Mrs. Proudie, with great emphasis on her words. "What you say is true. We have improved."

"Not a doubt about that," said the archdeacon. Then Mrs. Grantly interposed, strove to change the subject, and threw oil upon the waters.

"Talking of improvements," said Mrs. Grantly, "what an excellent row of houses they have built at the bottom of High Street. I wonder who is to live in them?"

"I remember when that was the very worst part of the town," said Dr. Thorne.

"And now they're asking seventy pounds apiece for houses which did not cost above six hundred each to build," said Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, with that seeming dislike of modern success which is evinced by most of the elders of the world.

"And who is to live in them?" asked Mrs. Grantly.

"Two of them have been already taken by clergymen," said the bishop, in a tone of triumph.

"Yes," said the archdeacon, "and the houses in the Close which used to be the residences of the prebendaries have been leased out to tallow-chandlers and retired brewers. That comes of the working of the Ecclesiastical Commission."

"And why not?" demanded Mrs. Proudie.

"Why not, indeed, if you like to have tallow-chandlers next door to you?" said the archdeacon. "In the old days, we would sooner have had our brethren near to us."

"There is nothing, Dr. Grantly, so objectionable in a cathedral town as a lot of idle clergymen," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is beginning to be a question to me," said the archdeacon, "whether there is any use in clergymen at all for the present generation."

"Dr. Grantly, those cannot be your real sentiments," said Mrs. Proudie. Then Mrs. Grantly, working hard in her vocation as a peacemaker, changed the conversation again, and began to talk of the American war. But even that was made matter of discord on church matters,—the archdeacon professing an opinion that the Southerners were Christian gentlemen, and the Northerners infidel snobs; whereas Mrs. Proudie had an idea that the Gospel was preached with genuine zeal in the Northern States. And at each such outbreak the poor bishop would laugh uneasily, and say a word or two to which no one paid much attention. And so the dinner went on, not always in the

most pleasant manner for those who preferred continued social good-humour to the occasional excitement of a half-suppressed battle.

Not a word was said about Mr. Crawley. When Mrs. Proudie and the ladies had left the dining-room, the bishop strove to get up a little lay conversation. He spoke to Mr. Thorne about his game, and to Dr. Thorne about his timber, and even to Mr. Gresham about his hounds. "It is not so very many years, Mr. Gresham," said he, "since the Bishop of Barchester was expected to keep hounds himself," and the bishop laughed at his own joke.

"Your lordship shall have them back at the palace next season," said young Frank Gresham, "if you will promise to do the county justice."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the bishop. "What do you say, Mr. Tozer?" Mr. Tozer was the chaplain on duty.

"I have not the least objection in the world, my lord," said Mr. Tozer, "to act as second whip."

"I'm afraid you'll find them an expensive adjunct to the episcopate," said the archdeacon. And then the joke was over; for there had been a rumour, now for some years prevalent in Barchester, that Bishop Proudie was not liberal in his expenditure. As Mr. Thorne said afterwards to his cousin the doctor, the archdeacon might have spared that sneer. "The archdeacon will never spare the man who sits in his father's seat," said the doctor. "The pity of it is that men who are so thoroughly different in all their sympathies should ever be brought into contact." "Dear, dear," said the archdeacon, as he stood afterwards on the rug before the drawing-room fire, "how many rubbers of whist I have seen played in this room." "I sincerely hope that you will never see another played here," said Mrs. Proudie. "I'm quite sure that I shall not," said the archdeacon. For this last sally his wife scolded him bitterly on their way home. "You know very well," she said, "that the times are changed, and that if you were Bishop of Barchester yourself you would not have whist played in the palace." "I

only know," said he, "that when we had the whist we had some true religion along with it, and some good sense and good feeling also." "You cannot be right to sneer at others for doing what you would do yourself," said his wife. Then the archdeacon threw himself sulkily into the corner of his carriage, and nothing more was said between him and his wife about the bishop's dinner-party.

Not a word was spoken that night at the palace about Mr. Crawley; and when that obnoxious guest from Plumstead was gone, Mrs. Proudie resumed her good-humour towards Dr. Tempest. So intent was she on conciliating him that she refrained even from abusing the archdeacon, whom she knew to have been intimate for very many years with the rector of Silverbridge. In her accustomed moods she would have broken forth in loud anger, caring nothing for old friendships; but at present she was thoughtful of the morrow, and desirous that Dr. Tempest should, if possible, meet her in a friendly humour when the great discussion as to Hogglestock should be opened between them. But Dr. Tempest understood her bearing, and as he pulled on his nightcap made certain resolutions of his own as to the morrow's proceedings. "I don't suppose she will dare to interfere," he had said to his wife; "but if she does, I shall certainly tell the bishop that I cannot speak on the subject in her presence."

At breakfast on the following morning there was no one present but the bishop, Mrs. Proudie, and Dr. Tempest. Very little was said at the meal. Mr. Crawley's name was not mentioned, but there seemed to be a general feeling among them that there was a task hanging over them which prevented any general conversation. The eggs were eaten and the coffee was drunk, but the eggs and the coffee disappeared almost in silence. When these ceremonies had been altogether completed, and it was clearly necessary that something further should be done, the bishop spoke: "Dr. Tempest," he said, "perhaps you will join me in my study at eleven. We can then say a few words to each other

about the unfortunate matter on which I shall have to trouble you." Dr. Tempest said he would be punctual to his appointment, and then the bishop withdrew, muttering something as to the necessity of looking at his letters. Dr. Tempest took a newspaper in his hand, which had been brought in by a servant, but Mrs. Proudie did not allow him to read it. "Dr. Tempest," she said, "this is a matter of most vital importance. I am quite sure that you feel that it is so."

"What matter, madam?" said the doctor.

"This terrible affair of Mr. Crawley's. If something be not done the whole diocese will be disgraced." Then she waited for an answer, but receiving none she was obliged to continue. "Of the poor man's guilt there can, I fear, be no doubt." Then there was another pause, but still the doctor made no answer. "And if he be guilty," said Mrs. Proudie, resolving that she would ask a question that must bring forth some reply, "can any experienced clergyman think that he can be fit to preach from the pulpit of a parish church? I am sure that you must agree with me, Dr. Tempest? Consider the souls of the people!"

"Mrs. Proudie," said he, "I think that we had better not discuss the matter."

"Not discuss it?"

"I think that we had better not do so. If I understand the bishop aright, he wishes that I should take some step in the matter."

"Of course he does."

"And therefore I must decline to make it a matter of common conversation."

"Common conversation, Dr. Tempest! I should be the last person in the world to make it a matter of common conversation. I regard this as by no means a common conversation. God forbid that it should be a common conversation. I am speaking now very seriously with reference to the interests of the Church, which I think will be endangered by having among her active servants a man who has

been guilty of so base a crime as theft. Think of it, Dr. Tempest. Theft! Stealing money! Appropriating to his own use a cheque for twenty pounds which did not belong to him! And then telling such terrible falsehoods about it! Can anything be worse, anything more scandalous, anything more dangerous? Indeed, Dr. Tempest, I do not regard this as any common conversation." The whole of this speech was not made at once, fluently, or without a break. From stop to stop Mrs. Proudie paused, waiting for her companion's words; but as he would not speak she was obliged to continue. "I am sure that you cannot but agree with me, Dr. Tempest?" she said.

"I am quite sure that I shall not discuss it with you," said the doctor, very brusquely.

"And why not? Are you not here to discuss it?"

"Not with you, Mrs. Proudie. You must excuse me for saying so, but I am not here to discuss any such matter with you. Were I to do so, I should be guilty of a very great impropriety."

"All these things are in common between me and the bishop," said Mrs. Proudie, with an air that was intended to be dignified, but which nevertheless displayed her rising anger.

"As to that I know nothing, but they cannot be in common between you and me. It grieves me much that I should have to speak to you in such a strain, but my duty allows me no alternative. I think, if you will permit me, I will take a turn round the garden before I keep my appointment with his lordship." And so saying he escaped from the lady without hearing her further remonstrance.

It still wanted nearly an hour to the time named by the bishop, and Dr. Tempest used it in preparing for his withdrawal from the palace as soon as his interview with the bishop should be over. After what had passed he thought that he would be justified in taking his departure without bidding adieu formally to Mrs. Proudie. He would say a word or two, explaining his haste, to the bishop; and then,

if he could get out of the house at once, it might be that he would never see Mrs. Proudie again. He was rather proud of his success in their late battle, but he felt that, having been so completely victorious, it would be foolish in him to risk his laurels in the chance of another encounter. He would say not a word of what had happened to the bishop, and he thought it probable that neither would Mrs. Proudie speak of it,—at any rate till after he was gone. Generals who are beaten out of the field are not quick to talk of their own repulses. He, indeed, had not beaten Mrs. Proudie out of the field. He had, in fact, himself run away. But he had left his foe silenced; and with such a foe, and in such a contest, that was everything. He put up his portmanteau, therefore, and prepared for his final retreat. Then he rang his bell and desired the servant to show him to the bishop's study. The servant did so, and when he entered the room the first thing he saw was Mrs. Proudie sitting in an arm-chair near the window. The bishop was also in the room, sitting with his arms upon the writing-table, and his head upon his hands. It was very evident that Mrs. Proudie did not consider herself to have been beaten, and that she was prepared to fight another battle. "Will you sit down, Dr. Tempest?" she said, motioning him with her hand to a chair opposite to that occupied by the bishop. Dr. Tempest sat down. He felt that at the moment he had nothing else to do, and that he must restrain any remonstrance that he might make till Mr. Crawley's name should be mentioned. He was almost lost in admiration of the woman. He had left her, as he thought, utterly vanquished and prostrated by his determined but uncourteous usage of her; and here she was, present again upon the field of battle as though she had never been even wounded. He could see that there had been words between her and the bishop, and that she had carried a point on which the bishop had been very anxious to have his own way. He could perceive at once that the bishop had begged her to absent herself and was greatly chagrined that he should not have prevailed

with her. There she was,—and as Dr. Tempest was resolved that he would neither give advice nor receive instructions respecting Mr. Crawley in her presence, he could only draw upon his courage and his strategy for the coming warfare. For a few moments no one said a word. The bishop felt that if Dr. Tempest would only begin, the work on hand might be got through, even in his wife's presence. Mrs. Proudie was aware that her husband should begin. If he would do so, and if Dr. Tempest would listen and then reply, she might gradually make her way into the conversation; and if her words were once accepted then she could say all that she desired to say; then she could play her part and become somebody in the episcopal work. When once she should have been allowed liberty of speech, the enemy would be powerless to stop her. But all this Dr. Tempest understood quite as well as she understood it, and had they waited till night he would not have been the first to mention Mr. Crawley's name.

The bishop sighed aloud. The sigh might be taken as expressing grief over the sin of the erring brother whose conduct they were then to discuss, and was not amiss. But when the sigh with its attendant murmurs had passed away it was necessary that some initiative step should be taken. "Dr. Tempest," said the bishop, "what are we to do about this poor stiff-necked gentleman?" Still Dr. Tempest did not speak. "There is no clergyman in the diocese," continued the bishop, "in whose prudence and wisdom I have more confidence than in yours. And I know, too, that you are by no means disposed to severity where severe measures are not necessary. What ought we to do? If he has been guilty, he should not surely return to his pulpit after the expiration of such punishment as the law of his country may award to him."

Dr. Tempest looked at Mrs. Proudie, thinking that she might perhaps say a word now; but Mrs. Proudie knew her part better and was silent. Angry as she was, she contrived to hold her peace. Let the debate once begin and she would

be able to creep into it, and then to lead it,—and so she would hold her own. But she had met a foe as wary as herself. “My lord,” said the doctor, “it will perhaps be well that you should communicate your wishes to me in writing. If it be possible for me to comply with them I will do so.”

“Yes;—exactly; no doubt;—but I thought that perhaps we might better understand each other if we had a few words of quiet conversation upon the subject. I believe you know the steps that I have——”

But here the bishop was interrupted. Dr. Tempest rose from his chair, and advancing to the table put both his hands upon it. “My lord,” he said, “I feel myself compelled to say that which I would very much rather leave unsaid, were it possible. I feel the difficulty, and I may say delicacy, of my position; but I should be untrue to my conscience and to my feeling of what is right in such matters, if I were to take any part in a discussion on this matter in the presence of—a lady.”

“Dr. Tempest, what is your objection?” said Mrs. Proudie, rising from her chair, and coming also to the table, so that from thence she might confront her opponent; and as she stood opposite to Dr. Tempest she also put both her hands upon the table.

“My dear, perhaps you will leave us for a few moments,” said the bishop. Poor bishop! Poor weak bishop! As the words came from his mouth he knew that they would be spoken in vain, and that, if so, it would have been better for him to have left them unspoken.

“Why should I be dismissed from your room without a reason?” said Mrs. Proudie. “Cannot Dr. Tempest understand that a wife may share her husband’s counsels,—as she must share his troubles? If he cannot, I pity him very much as to his own household.”

“Dr. Tempest,” said the bishop, “Mrs. Proudie takes the greatest possible interest in everything concerning the diocese.”

“I am sure, my lord,” said the doctor, “that you will see

how unseemly it would be that I should interfere in any way between you and Mrs. Proudie. I certainly will not do so. I can only say again that if you will communicate to me your wishes in writing, I will attend to them,—if it be possible.”

“You mean to be stubborn,” said Mrs. Proudie, whose prudence was beginning to give way under the great provocation to which her temper was being subjected.

“Yes, madam; if it is to be called stubbornness, I must be stubborn. My lord, Mrs. Proudie spoke to me on this subject in the breakfast-room after you had left it, and I then ventured to explain to her that in accordance with such light as I have on the matter, I could not discuss it in her presence. I greatly grieve that I failed to make myself understood by her,—as, otherwise, this unpleasantness might have been spared.”

“I understood you very well, Dr. Tempest, and I think you to be a most unreasonable man. Indeed, I might use a much harsher word.”

“You may use any word you please, Mrs. Proudie,” said the doctor.

“My dear, I really think you had better leave us for a few minutes,” said the bishop.

“No, my lord,—no,” said Mrs. Proudie, turning round upon her husband. “Not so. It would be most unbecoming that I should be turned out of a room in this palace by an uncourteous word from a parish clergyman. It would be unseemly. If Dr. Tempest forgets his duty, I will not forget mine. There are other clergymen in the diocese besides Dr. Tempest who can undertake the very easy task of this commission. As for his having been appointed rural dean I don’t know how many years ago, it is a matter of no consequence whatever. In such a preliminary inquiry any three clergymen will suffice. It need not be done by the rural dean at all.”

“My dear!”

“I will not be turned out of this room by Dr. Tempest;—and that is enough.”

“My lord,” said the doctor, “you had better write to me as I proposed to you just now.”

“His lordship will not write. His lordship will do nothing of the kind,” said Mrs. Proudie.

“My dear!” said the bishop, driven in his perplexity beyond all carefulness of reticence. “My dear, I do wish you wouldn’t,—I do indeed. If you would only go away!”

“I will not go away, my lord,” said Mrs. Proudie.

“But I will,” said Dr. Tempest, feeling true compassion for the unfortunate man whom he saw writhing in agony before him. “It will manifestly be for the best that I should retire. My lord, I wish you good morning. Mrs. Proudie, good morning.” And so he left the room.

“A most stubborn and a most ungentlemanlike man,” said Mrs. Proudie, as soon as the door was closed behind the retreating rural dean. “I do not think that in the whole course of my life I ever met with any one so insubordinate and so ill-mannered. He is worse than the archdeacon.” As she uttered these words she paced about the room. The bishop said nothing; and when she herself had been silent for a few minutes she turned upon him. “Bishop,” she said, “I hope that you agree with me. I expect that you will agree with me in a matter that is of so much moment to my comfort, and I may say to my position generally in the diocese. Bishop, why do you not speak?”

“You have behaved in such a way that I do not know that I shall ever speak again,” said the bishop.

“What is this that you say?”

“I say that I do not know how I shall ever speak again. You have disgraced me.”

“Disgraced you! I disgrace you! It is you that disgrace yourself by saying such words.”

“Very well. Let it be so. Perhaps you will go away now and leave me to myself. I have got a bad headache, and I can’t talk any more. Oh dear, oh dear, what will he think of it!”

“And you mean to tell me that I have been wrong!”

“Yes, you have been wrong,—very wrong. Why didn’t you go away when I asked you? You are always being wrong. I wish I had never come to Barchester. In any other position I should not have felt it so much. As it is I do not know how I can ever show my face again.”

“Not have felt what so much, Mr. Proudie?” said the wife, going back in the excitement of her anger to the nomenclature of old days. “And this is to be my return for all my care in your behalf! Allow me to tell you, sir, that in any position in which you may be placed I know what is due to you, and that your dignity will never lose anything in my hands. I wish that you were as well able to take care of it yourself.” Then she stalked out of the room, and left the poor man alone.

Bishop Proudie sat alone in his study throughout the whole day. Once or twice in the course of the morning his chaplain came to him on some matter of business, and was answered with a smile,—the peculiar softness of which the chaplain did not fail to attribute to the right cause. For it was soon known throughout the household that there had been a quarrel. Could he quite have made up his mind to do so—could he have resolved that it would be altogether better to quarrel with his wife,—the bishop would have appealed to the chaplain, and have asked at any rate for sympathy. But even yet he could not bring himself to confess his misery, and to own himself to another to be the wretch that he was. Then during the long hours of the day he sat thinking of it all. How happy could he be if it were only possible for him to go away, and become even a curate in a parish without his wife! Would there ever come to him a time of freedom? Would she ever die? He was older than she, and of course he would die first. Would it not be a fine thing if he could die at once, and thus escape from his misery?

What could he do, even supposing himself strong enough to fight the battle? He could not lock her up. He could not even very well lock her out of his room. She was his wife,

and must have the run of his house. He could not altogether debar her from the society of the diocesan clergymen. He had, on this very morning, taken strong measures with her. More than once or twice he had desired her to leave the room. What was there to be done with a woman who would not obey her husband,—who would not even leave him to the performance of his own work? What a blessed thing it would be if a bishop could go away from his home to his work every day like a clerk in a public office,—as a stone-mason does! But there was no such escape for him. He could not go away. And how was he to meet her again on this very day?

And then for hours he thought of Dr. Tempest and Mr. Crawley, considering what he had better do to repair the shipwreck of the morning. At last he resolved that he would write to the doctor; and before he had again seen his wife, he did write his letter, and he sent it off. In this letter he made no direct allusion to the occurrence of the morning, but wrote as though there had not been any fixed intention of a personal discussion between them. "I think it will be better that there should be a commission," he said, "and I would suggest that you should have four other clergymen with you. Perhaps you will select two yourself out of your rural deanery; and, if you do not object, I will name as the other two Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, who are both resident in the city." As he wrote these two names he felt ashamed of himself, knowing that he had chosen the two men as being special friends of his wife, and feeling that he should have been brave enough to throw aside all considerations of his wife's favour,—especially at this moment, in which he was putting on his armour to do battle against her. "It is not probable," he continued to say in his letter, "that you will be able to make your report until after the trial of this unfortunate gentleman shall have taken place, and a verdict shall have been given. Should he be acquitted, that, I imagine, should end the matter. There can be no reason why we should attempt to go beyond the

verdict of a jury. But should he be found guilty, I think we ought to be ready with such steps as it will be becoming for us to take at the expiration of any sentence which may be pronounced. It will be, at any rate, expedient that in such case the matter should be brought before an ecclesiastical court." He knew well as he wrote this, that he was proposing something much milder than the course intended by his wife when she had instigated him to take proceedings in the matter; but he did not much regard that now. Though he had been weak enough to name certain clergymen as assessors with the rural dean, because he thought that by doing so he would to a certain degree conciliate his wife,—though he had been so far a coward, yet he was resolved that he would not sacrifice to her his own judgment and his own conscience in his manner of proceeding. He kept no copy of his letter, so that he might be unable to show her his very words when she should ask to see them. Of course he would tell her what he had done; but in telling her he would keep to himself what he had said as to the result of an acquittal in a civil court. She need not yet be told that he had promised to take such a verdict as sufficing also for an ecclesiastical acquittal. In this spirit his letter was written and sent off before he again saw his wife.

He did not meet her till they came together in the drawing-room before dinner. In explaining the whole truth as to circumstances as they existed at the palace at that moment, it must be acknowledged that Mrs. Proudie herself, great as was her courage, and wide as were the resources which she possessed within herself, was somewhat appalled by the position of affairs. I fear that it may now be too late for me to excite much sympathy in the mind of any reader on behalf of Mrs. Proudie. I shall never be able to make her virtues popular. But she had virtues, and their existence now made her unhappy. She did regard the dignity of her husband, and she felt at the present moment that she had almost compromised it. She did also regard the welfare of the clergymen around her, thinking of course in

a general way that certain of them who agreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be studied, and that certain of them who disagreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be postponed. But now an idea made its way into her bosom that she was not perhaps doing the best for the welfare of the diocese generally. What if it should come to pass that all the clergymen of the diocese should refuse to open their mouths in her presence on ecclesiastical subjects, as Dr. Tempest had done? This special day was not one on which she was well contented with herself, though by no means on that account was her anger mitigated against the offending rural dean.

During dinner she struggled to say a word or two to her husband, as though there had been no quarrel between them. With him the matter had gone so deep that he could not answer her in the same spirit. There were sundry members of the family present,—daughters, and a son-in-law, and a daughter's friend who was staying with them; but even in the hope of appearing to be serene before them he could not struggle through his deep despondence. He was very silent, and to his wife's words he answered hardly anything. He was courteous and gentle with them all, but he spoke as little as was possible, and during the evening he sat alone, with his head leaning on his hand,—not pretending even to read. He was aware that it was too late to make even an attempt to conceal his misery and his disgrace from his own family.

His wife came to him that night in his dressing-room in a spirit of feminine softness that was very unusual with her. "My dear," said she, "let us forget what occurred this morning. If there has been any anger we are bound as Christians to forget it." She stood over him as she spoke, and put her hand upon his shoulder almost caressingly.

"When a man's heart is broken, he cannot forget it," was his reply. She still stood by him, and still kept her hand upon him; but she could think of no other words of comfort to say. "I will go to bed," he said. "It is the best place for me." Then she left him, and he went to bed.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Softness of Sir Raffle Buffle

WE have seen that John Eames was prepared to start on his journey in search of the Arabins, and have seen him after he had taken farewell of his office and of his master there, previous to his departure; but that matter of his departure had not been arranged altogether with comfort as far as his official interests were concerned. He had been perhaps a little abrupt in his mode of informing Sir Raffle Buffle that there was a pressing cause for his official absence, and Sir Raffle had replied to him that no private pressure could be allowed to interfere with his public duties. "I must go, Sir Raffle, at any rate," Johnny had said; "it is a matter affecting my family, and must not be neglected." "If you intend to go without leave," said Sir Raffle, "I presume you will first put your resignation into the hands of Mr. Kissing." Now, Mr. Kissing was the secretary to the Board. This had been serious undoubtedly. John Eames was not specially anxious to keep his present position as private secretary to Sir Raffle, but he certainly had no desire to give up his profession altogether. He said nothing more to the great man on that occasion, but before he left the office he wrote a private note to the chairman expressing the extreme importance of his business, and begging that he might have leave of absence. On the next morning he received it back with a very few words written across it. "It can't be done," were the very few words which Sir Raffle Buffle had written across the note from his private secretary. Here was a difficulty which Johnny had not anticipated, and which seemed to be insuperable. Sir Raffle would not have answered him in that strain if he had not been very much in earnest.

"I should send him a medical certificate," said Cradell, his friend of old.

"Nonsense," said Eames.

"I don't see that it's nonsense at all. They can't get over a medical certificate from a respectable man; and everybody has got something the matter with him of some kind."

"I should go and let him do his worst," said Fisher, who was another clerk. "It wouldn't be more than putting you down a place or two. As to losing your present berth you don't mind that, and they would never think of dismissing you."

"But I do mind being put down a place or two," said Johnny, who could not forget that were he so put down his friend Fisher would gain the step which he would lose.

"I should give him a barrel of oysters, and talk to him about the Chancellor of the Exchequer," said FitzHoward, who had been private secretary to Sir Raffle before Eames, and might therefore be supposed to know the man.

"That might have done very well if I had not asked him and been refused first," said John Eames. "I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll write a long letter on a sheet of foolscap paper, with a regular margin, so that it must come before the Board, and perhaps that will frighten him."

When he mentioned his difficulty on that evening to Mr. Toogood, the lawyer begged him to give up the journey. "It will only be sending a clerk, and it won't cost so very much after all," said Toogood. But Johnny's pride could not allow him to give way. "I'm not going to be done about it," said he. "I'm not going to resign, but I will go even though they may dismiss me. I don't think it will come to that, but if it does it must." His uncle begged of him not to think of such an alternative; but this discussion took place after dinner, and away from the office, and Eames would not submit to bow his neck to authority. "If it comes to that," said he, "a fellow might as well be a slave at once. And what is the use of a fellow having a little money if it does not make him independent? You may be sure of one thing, I shall go; and that on the day fixed."

On the next morning John Eames was very silent when

he went into Sir Raffle's room at the office. There was now only this day and another before that fixed for his departure, and it was of course very necessary that matters should be arranged. But he said nothing to Sir Raffle during the morning. The great man himself was condescending and endeavoured to be kind. He knew that his stern refusal had greatly irritated his private secretary, and was anxious to show that, though in the cause of public duty he was obliged to be stern, he was quite willing to forget his sternness when the necessity for it had passed away. On this morning, therefore, he was very cheery. But to all his cheery good-humour John Eames would make no response. Late in the afternoon, when most of the men had left the office, Johnny appeared before the chairman for the last time that day with a very long face. He was dressed in black, and had changed his ordinary morning coat for a frock, which gave him an appearance altogether unlike that which was customary to him. And he spoke almost in a whisper, very slowly; and when Sir Raffle joked,—and Sir Raffle often would joke,—he not only did not laugh, but he absolutely sighed. "Is there anything the matter with you, Eames?" asked Sir Raffle.

"I am in great trouble," said John Eames.

"And what is your trouble?"

"It is essential for the honour of one of my family that I should be at Florence by this day week. I cannot make up my mind what I ought to do. I do not wish to lose my position in the public service, to which, as you know, I am warmly attached; but I cannot submit to see the honour of my family sacrificed!"

"Eames," said Sir Raffle, "that must be nonsense;—that must be nonsense. There can be no reason why you should always expect to have your own way in everything."

"Of course if I go without leave I shall be dismissed."

"Of course you will. It is out of the question that a young man should take the bit between his teeth in that way."

"As for taking the bit between his teeth, Sir Raffle, I do

not think that any man was ever more obedient, perhaps I should say more submissive, than I have been. But there must be a limit to everything."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Eames?" said Sir Raffle, turning in anger upon his private secretary. But Johnny disregarded his anger. Johnny, indeed, had made up his mind that Sir Raffle should be very angry. "What do you mean, Mr. Eames, by saying that there must be a limit? I know nothing about limits. One would suppose that you intended to make an accusation against me."

"So I do. I think, Sir Raffle, that you are treating me with great cruelty. I have explained to you that family circumstances——"

"You have explained nothing, Mr. Eames."

"Yes, I have, Sir Raffle. I have explained to you that matters relating to my family, which materially affect the honour of a certain one of its members, demand that I should go at once to Florence. You tell me that if I go I shall be dismissed."

"Of course you must not go without leave. I never heard of such a thing in all my life." And Sir Raffle lifted up his hands towards heaven, almost in dismay.

"So I have drawn up a short statement of the circumstances, which I hope may be read at the Board when the question of my dismissal comes before it."

"You mean to go, then?"

"Yes, Sir Raffle; I must go. The honour of a certain branch of my family demands that I should do so. As I have for some time been so especially under you, I thought it would be proper to show you what I have said before I send my letter in, and therefore I have brought it with me. Here it is." And Johnny handed to Sir Raffle an official document of large dimensions.

Sir Raffle began to be uncomfortable. He had acquired a character for tyranny in the public service of which he was aware, though he thought that he knew well that he had never deserved it. Some official big-wig,—perhaps that

Chancellor of the Exchequer of whom he was so fond,—had on one occasion hinted to him that a little softness of usage would be compatible with the prejudices of the age. Softness was impossible to Sir Raffle; but his temper was sufficiently under his control to enable him to encounter the rebuke, and to pull himself up from time to time when he found himself tempted to speak loud and to take things with a high hand. He knew that a clerk should not be dismissed for leaving his office, who could show that his absence had been caused by some matter really affecting the interest of his family; and that were he to drive Eames to go on this occasion without leave, Eames would be simply called in to state what was this matter of moment which had taken him away. Probably he had stated that matter of moment in this very document which Sir Raffle was holding in his hand. But Sir Raffle was not willing to be conquered by the document. If it was necessary that he should give way, he would much prefer to give way,—out of his own good-nature, let us say,—without looking at the document at all. “I must, under the circumstances, decline to read this,” said he, “unless it should come before me officially,” and he handed back the paper.

“I thought it best to let you see it if you pleased,” said John Eames. Then he turned round as though he were going to leave the room; but suddenly he turned back again. “I don’t like to leave you, Sir Raffle, without saying good-by. I do not suppose we shall meet again. Of course you must do your duty, and I do not wish you to think that I have any personal ill-will against you.” So saying, he put out his hand to Sir Raffle as though to take a final farewell. Sir Raffle looked at him in amazement. He was dressed, as has been said, in black, and did not look like the John Eames of every day to whom Sir Raffle was accustomed.

“I don’t understand this at all,” said Sir Raffle.

“I was afraid that it was only too plain,” said John Eames.

“And you must go?”

“Oh, yes;—that’s certain. I have pledged myself to go.”

“Of course I don’t know anything of this matter that is so important to your family.”

“No; you do not,” said Johnny.

“Can’t you explain it to me, then? so that I may have some reason,—if there is any reason.”

Then John told the story of Mr. Crawley,—a considerable portion of the story; and in his telling of it, I think it probable that he put more weight upon the necessity of his mission to Italy than it could have fairly been made to bear. In the course of the narration Sir Raffle did once contrive to suggest that a lawyer by going to Florence might do the business at any rate as well as John Eames. But Johnny denied this. “No, Sir Raffle, it is impossible; quite impossible,” he said. “If you saw the lawyer who is acting in the matter, Mr. Toogood, who is also my uncle, he would tell you the same.” Sir Raffle had already heard something of the story of Mr. Crawley, and was now willing to accept the sad tragedy of that case as an excuse for his private secretary’s somewhat insubordinate conduct. “Under the circumstances, Eames, I suppose you must go; but I think you should have told me all about it before.”

“I did not like to trouble you, Sir Raffle, with private business.”

“It is always best to tell the whole of a story,” said Sir Raffle. Johnny being quite content with the upshot of the negotiations accepted this gentle rebuke in silence, and withdrew. On the next day he appeared again at the office in his ordinary costume, and an idea crossed Sir Raffle’s brain that he had been partly “done” by the affectation of a costume. “I’ll be even with him some day yet,” said Sir Raffle to himself.

“I’ve got my leave, boys,” said Eames when he went out into the room in which his three friends sat.

“No!” said Cradell.

“But I have,” said Johnny.

“You don’t mean that old Huffle Scuffle has given it out of his own head?” said Fisher.

"Indeed he has," said Johnny; "and bade God bless me into the bargain."

"Andy you didn't give him the oysters?" said Fitz Howard.

"Not a shell," said Johnny.

"I'm blessed if you don't beat cock-fighting," said Cradell, lost in admiration at his friend's adroitness.

We know how John passed his evening after that. He went first to see Lily Dale at her uncle's lodgings in Sackville Street, from thence he was taken to the presence of the charming Madalina in Porchester Terrace, and then wound up the night with his friend Conway Dalrymple. When he got to his bed he felt himself to have been triumphant, but in spite of his triumph he was ashamed of himself. Why had he left Lily to go to Madalina? As he thought of this he quoted to himself against himself Hamlet's often-quoted appeal to the two portraits. How could he not despise himself in that he could find any pleasure with Madalina, having a Lily Dale to fill his thoughts? "But she is not fair for me," he said to himself,—thinking thus to comfort himself. But he did not comfort himself.

On the next morning early his uncle, Mr. Toogood met him at the Dover Railway Station. "Upon my word, Johnny, you're a clever fellow," said he. "I never thought that you'd make it all right with Sir Raffle."

"As right as a trivet, uncle. There are some people, if you can only get to learn the length of their feet, you can always fit them with shoes afterwards."

"You'll go on direct to Florence, Johnny?"

"Yes; I think so. From what we have heard, Mrs. Arabin must be either there or at Venice, and I don't suppose I could learn from any one at Paris at which town she is staying at this moment."

"Her address is Florence;—poste restante, Florence. You will be sure to find out at any of the hotels where she is staying, or where she has been staying."

"But when I have found her, I don't suppose she can tell me anything," said Johnny.

“Who can tell? She may or she may not. My belief is that the money was her present altogether, and not his. It seems that they don’t mix their moneys. He has always had some scruple about it because of her son by a former marriage, and they always have different accounts at their bankers’. I found that out when I was at Barchester.”

“But Crawley was his friend.”

“Yes, Crawley was his friend; but I don’t know that fifty-pound notes have always been so very plentiful with him. Deans’ incomes ain’t what they were, you know.”

“I don’t know anything about that,” said Johnny.

“Well; they are not. And he has nothing of his own, as far as I can learn. It would be just the thing for her to do,—to give the money to his friend. At any rate she will tell you whether it was so or not.”

“And then I will go on to Jerusalem, after him.”

“Should you find it necessary. He will probably be on his way back, and she will know where you can hit him on the road. You must make him understand that it is essential that he should be here some little time before the trial. You can understand, Johnny,”—and as he spoke Mr. Toogood lowered his voice to a whisper, though they were walking together on the platform of the railway station, and could not possibly have been overheard by any one. “You can understand that it may be necessary to prove that he is not exactly *compos mentis*, and if so it will be essential that he should have some influential friend near him. Otherwise that bishop will trample him into dust.” If Mr. Toogood could have seen the bishop at this time and have read the troubles of the poor man’s heart, he would hardly have spoken of him as being so terrible a tyrant.

“I understand all that,” said Johnny.

“So that, in fact, I shall expect to see you both together,” said Toogood.

“I hope the dean is a good fellow.”

“They tell me he is a very good fellow.”

“I never did see much of bishops or deans as yet,” said

Johnny, "and I should feel rather awe-struck travelling with one."

"I should fancy that a dean is very much like anybody else."

"But the man's hat would cow me."

"I daresay you'll find him walking about Jerusalem with a wide-awake on, and a big stick in his hand, probably smoking a cigar. Deans contrive to get out of their armour sometimes, as the knights of old used to do. Bishops, I fancy, find it more difficult. Well;—good-by, old fellow. I'm very much obliged to you for going,—I am, indeed. I don't doubt but what we shall pull through, somehow."

Then Mr. Toogood went home to breakfast, and from his own house he proceeded to his office. When he had been there an hour or two, there came to him a messenger from the Income-tax Office, with an official note addressed to himself by Sir Raffle Buffle,—a note which looked to be very official. Sir Raffle Buffle presented his compliments to Mr. Toogood, and could Mr. Toogood favour Sir R. B. with the present address of Mr. John Eames. "Old fox," said Mr. Toogood;—"but then such a stupid old fox! As if it was likely that I should have peached on Johnny if anything was wrong." So Mr. Toogood sent his compliments to Sir Raffle Buffle, and begged to inform Sir R. B. that Mr. John Eames was away on very particular family business, which would take him in the first instance to Florence;—but that from Florence he would probably have to go on to Jerusalem without the loss of an hour. "Stupid old fool!" said Mr. Toogood, as he sent off his reply by the messenger.

CHAPTER XLIX

Near the Close

I WONDER whether any one will read these pages who has never known anything of the bitterness of a family quarrel? If so, I shall have a reader very fortunate, or else very cold-blooded. It would be wrong to say that love produces quarrels; but love does produce those intimate relations of which quarrelling is too often one of the consequences,—one of the consequences which frequently seem to be so natural, and sometimes seem to be unavoidable. One brother rebukes the other,—and what brothers ever lived together between whom there was no such rebuking?—then some warm word is misunderstood and hotter words follow and there is a quarrel. The husband tyrannizes, knowing that it is his duty to direct, and the wife disobeys, or only partially obeys, thinking that a little independence will become her,—and so there is a quarrel. The father, anxious only for his son's good, looks into that son's future with other eyes than those of his son himself,—and so there is a quarrel. They come very easily, these quarrels, but the quittance from them is sometimes terribly difficult. Much of thought is necessary before the angry man can remember that he too in part may have been wrong; and any attempt at such thinking is almost beyond the power of him who is carefully nursing his wrath, lest it cool! But the nursing of such quarrelling kills all happiness. The very man who is nursing his wrath, lest it cool,—his wrath against one whom he loves perhaps the best of all whom it has been given him to love,—is himself wretched as long as it lasts. His anger poisons every pleasure of his life. He is sullen at his meals, and cannot understand his book as he turns its pages. His work, let it be what it may, is ill done. He is full of his quarrel,—nursing it. He is telling himself how much he has loved that wicked one, how many have been his sacrifices for that wicked

one, and that now that wicked one is repaying him simply with wickedness! And yet the wicked one is at that very moment dearer to him than ever. If that wicked one could only be forgiven how sweet would the world be again! And yet he nurses his wrath.

So it was in these days with Archdeacon Grantly. He was very angry with his son. It is hardly too much to say that in every moment of his life, whether waking or sleeping, he was thinking of the injury that his son was doing him. He had almost come to forget the fact that his anger had first been roused by the feeling that his son was about to do himself an injury,—to cut his own throat. Various other considerations had now added themselves to that, and filled not only his mind but his daily conversation with his wife. How terrible would be the disgrace to Lord Hartletop, how incurable the injury to Griselda, the marchioness, should the brother-in-law of the one, and the brother of the other, marry the daughter of a convicted thief! “Of himself he would say nothing.” So he declared constantly, though of himself he did say a great deal. “Of himself he would say nothing, though of course such a marriage would ruin him in the county.” “My dear,” said his wife, “that is nonsense. That really is nonsense. I feel sure there is not a single person in the county who would think of the marriage in such a light.” Then the archdeacon would have quarrelled with his wife too, had she not been too wise to admit such a quarrel. Mrs. Grantly was very wise and knew that it took two persons to make a quarrel. He told her over and over again that she was in league with her son,—that she was encouraging her son to marry Grace Crawley. “I believe that in your heart you wish it,” he once said to her. “No, my dear, I do not wish it. I do not think it a becoming marriage. But if he does marry her, I should wish to receive his wife in my house, and certainly should not quarrel with him.” “I will never receive her,” the archdeacon had replied; “and as for him, I can only say that in such case I will make no provision for his family.”

It will be remembered that the archdeacon had on a former occasion instructed his wife to write to their son and tell him of his father's determination. Mrs. Grantly had so manœuvred that a little time had been gained, and that those instructions had not been insisted upon in all their bitterness. Since that time Major Grantly had renewed his assurance that he would marry Grace Crawley if Grace Crawley would accept him,—writing on this occasion direct to his father,—and had asked his father whether, in such case, he was to look forward to be disinherited. "It is essential that I should know," the major had said, "because in such case I must take immediate measures for leaving this place." His father had sent him back his letter, writing a few words at the bottom of it. "If you do as you propose above, you must expect nothing from me." The words were written in large round handwriting, very hurriedly, and the son when he received them perfectly understood the mood of his father's mind when he wrote them.

Then there came tidings, addressed on this occasion to Mrs. Grantly, that Cosby Lodge was to be given up. Lady-day had come, and the notice, necessarily to be given at that period, was so given. "I know this will grieve you," Major Grantly had said, "but my father has driven me to it." This, in itself, was a cause of great sorrow, both to the archdeacon and to Mrs. Grantly, as there were circumstances connected with Cosby Lodge which made them think that it was a very desirable residence for their son. "I shall sell everything about the place and go abroad at once," he said in a subsequent letter. "My present idea is that I shall settle myself at Pau, as my income will suffice for me to live there, and education for Edith will be cheap. At any rate I will not continue in England. I could never be happy here in circumstances so altered. Of course I should not have left my profession, unless I had understood from my father that the income arising from it would not be necessary to me. I do not, however, mean to complain, but simply tell you that I shall go." There were many

letters between the mother and son in those days. "I shall stay till after the trial," he said. "If she will then go with me, well and good; but whether she will or not, I shall not remain here." All this seemed to Mrs. Grantly to be peculiarly unfortunate, for, had he not resolved to go, things might even yet have righted themselves. From what she could now understand of the character of Miss Crawley, whom she did not know personally, she thought it probable that Grace, in the event of her father being found guilty by the jury, would absolutely and persistently refuse the offer made to her. She would be too good, as Mrs. Grantly put it to herself, to bring misery and disgrace into another family. But should Mr. Crawley be acquitted, and should the marriage then take place, the archdeacon himself might probably be got to forgive it. In either case there would be no necessity for breaking up the house at Cosby Lodge. But her dear son Henry, her best beloved, was obstinate and stiff-necked, and would take no advice. "He is even worse than his father," she said, in her short-lived anger, to her own father, to whom alone at this time she could unburden her griefs, seeking consolation and encouragement.

It was her habit to go over to the deanery at any rate twice a week at this time, and on the occasion of one of the visits so made, she expressed very strongly her distress at the family quarrel which had come among them. The old man took his grandson's part through and through. "I do not at all see why he should not marry the young lady if he likes her. As for money, there ought to be enough without his having to look for a wife with a fortune."

"It is not a question of money, papa."

"And as to rank," continued Mr. Harding, "Henry will not at any rate be going lower than his father did when he married you;—not so low indeed, for at that time I was only a minor canon, and Mr. Crawley is in possession of a benefice."

"Papa, all that is nonsense. It is, indeed."

"Very likely, my dear."

"It is not because Mr. Crawley is only perpetual curate of Hogglestock, that the archdeacon objects to the marriage. It has nothing to do with that at all. At the present moment he is in disgrace."

"Under a cloud, my dear. Let us pray that it may be only a passing cloud."

"All the world thinks that he was guilty. And then he is such a man:—so singular, so unlike anybody else! You know, papa, that I don't think very much of money, merely as money."

"I hope not, my dear. Money is worth thinking of, but it is not worth very much thought."

"But it does give advantages, and the absence of such advantages must be very much felt in the education of a girl. You would hardly wish Henry to marry a young woman who from want of money, had not been brought up among ladies. It is not Miss Crawley's fault but such has been her lot. We cannot ignore these deficiencies, papa."

"Certainly not, my dear."

"You would not, for instance, wish that Henry should marry a kitchen-maid."

"But is Miss Crawley a kitchen-maid, Susan?"

"I don't quite say that."

"I am told that she has been educated infinitely better than most of the young ladies in the neighbourhood," said Mr. Harding.

"I believe that her father has taught her Greek; and I suppose she has learned something of French at that school at Silverbridge."

"Then the kitchen-maid theory is sufficiently disposed of," said Mr. Harding, with mild triumph.

"You know what I mean, papa. But the fact is, that it is impossible to deal with men. They will never be reasonable. A marriage such as this would be injurious to Henry; but it will not be ruinous; and as to disinheriting him for it, that would be downright wicked."

"I think so," said Mr. Harding.

"But the archdeacon will look at it as though it would destroy Henry and Edith altogether, while you speak of it as though it were the best thing in the world."

"If the young people love each other, I think it would be the best thing in the world," said Mr. Harding.

"But, papa, you cannot but think that his father's wish should go for something," said Mrs. Grantly, who, desirous as she was on the one side to support her son, could not bear that her husband should, on the other side, be declared to be altogether in the wrong.

"I do not know, my dear," said Mr. Harding; "but I do think, that if the two young people are fond of each other, and if there is anything for them to live upon, it cannot be right to keep them apart. You know, my dear, she is the daughter of a gentleman." Mrs. Grantly upon this left her father almost brusquely, without speaking another word on the subject; for, though she was opposed to the vehement anger of her husband, she could not endure the proposition now made by her father.

Mr. Harding was at this time living all alone in the deanery. For some few years the deanery had been his home, and as his youngest daughter was the dean's wife, there could be no more comfortable resting-place for the evening of his life. During the last month or two the days had gone tediously with him; for he had had the large house all to himself, and he was a man who did not love solitude. It is hard to conceive that the old, whose thoughts have been all thought out, should ever love to live alone. Solitude is surely for the young, who have time before them for the execution of schemes, and who can, therefore, take delight in thinking. In these days the poor old man would wander about the rooms, shambling from one chamber to another, and would feel ashamed when the servants met him ever on the move. He would make little apologies for his uneasiness, which they would accept graciously, understanding, after a fashion, why it was that he was un-

easy. "He ain't got nothing to do," said the housemaid to the cook, "and as for reading, they say that some of the young ones can read all day sometimes, and all night too; but, bless you, when you're nigh eighty, reading don't go for much." The housemaid was right as to Mr. Harding's reading. He was not one who had read so much in his earlier days as to enable him to make reading go far with him now that he was near eighty. So he wandered about the room, and sat here for a few minutes, and there for a few minutes, and though he did not sleep much, he made the hours of the night as many as was possible. Every morning he shambled across from the deanery to the cathedral, and attended the morning service, sitting in the stall which he had occupied for fifty years. The distance was very short, not exceeding, indeed, a hundred yards from a side-door in the deanery to another side-door into the cathedral; but short as it was there had come to be a question whether he should be allowed to go alone. It had been feared that he might fall on his passage and hurt himself; for there was a step here, and a step there, and the light was not very good in the purlieus of the old cathedral. A word or two had been said once, and the offer of an arm to help him had been made; but he had rejected the proffered assistance,—softly, indeed, but still firmly,—and every day he tottered off by himself, hardly lifting his feet as he went, and aiding himself on his journey by a hand upon the wall when he thought that nobody was looking at him. But many did see him, and they who knew him,—ladies generally of the city,—would offer him a hand. Nobody was milder in his dislikings than Mr. Harding; but there were ladies in Barchester upon whose arm he would always decline to lean, bowing courteously as he did so, and saying a word or two of constrained civility. There were others whom he would allow to accompany him home to the door of the deanery, with whom he delighted to linger and chat if the morning was warm, and to whom he would tell little stories of his own doings in the cathe-

dral services in the old days, when Bishop Grantly had ruled in the diocese. Never a word did he say against Bishop Proudie, or against Bishop Proudie's wife; but the many words which he did say in praise of Bishop Grantly,—who, by his showing, was surely one of the best of churchmen who ever walked through this vale of sorrow,—were as eloquent in dispraise of the existing prelate as could have been any more clearly-pointed phrases. This daily visit to the cathedral, where he would say his prayers as he had said them for so many years, and listen to the organ, of which he knew all the power and every blemish as though he himself had made the stops and fixed the pipes, was the chief occupation of his life. It was a pity that it could not have been made to cover a larger portion of the day.

It was sometimes sad enough to watch him as he sat alone. He would have a book near him, and for a while would keep it in his hands. It would generally be some volume of good old standard theology with which he had been, or supposed himself to have been, conversant from his youth. But the book would soon be laid aside, and gradually he would move himself away from it, and he would stand about in the room, looking now out of a window from which he would fancy that he could not be seen, or gazing up at some print which he had known for years; and then he would sit down for a while in one chair, and for a while in another, while his mind was wandering back into old days, thinking of old troubles and remembering his old joys. And he had a habit, when he was sure that he was not watched, of creeping up to a great black wooden case, which always stood in one corner of the sitting-room which he occupied in the deanery. Mr. Harding, when he was younger, had been a performer on the violoncello, and in this case there was still the instrument from which he had been wont to extract the sounds which he had so dearly loved. Now in these latter days he never made any attempt to play. Soon after he had come to the deanery there had fallen upon him an illness, and after that he had



never again asked for his bow. They who were around him,—his daughter chiefly and her husband,—had given the matter much thought, arguing with themselves whether or no it would be better to invite him to resume the task he had so loved; for of all the works of his life this playing on the violoncello had been the sweetest to him; but even before that illness his hand had greatly failed him, and the dean and Mrs. Arabin had agreed that it would be better to let the matter pass without a word. He had never asked to be allowed to play. He had expressed no regrets. When he himself would propose that his daughter should “give them a little music,”—and he would make such a proposition on every evening that was suitable,—he would never say a word of those former performances at which he himself had taken a part. But it had become known to Mrs. Arabin, through the servants, that he had once dragged the instrument forth from its case when he had thought the house to be nearly deserted; and a wail of sounds had been heard, very low, very short-lived, recurring now and again at fitful intervals. He had at those times attempted to play, as though with a muffled bow,—so that none should know of his vanity and folly. Then there had been further consultations at the deanery, and it had been again agreed that it would be best to say nothing to him of his music.

In these latter days of which I am now speaking he would never draw the instrument out of its case. Indeed he was aware that it was too heavy for him to handle without assistance. But he would open the prison door, and gaze upon the thing that he loved, and he would pass his fingers among the broad strings, and ever and anon he would produce from one of them a low, melancholy, almost unearthly sound. And then he would pause, never daring to produce two such notes in succession,—one close upon the other. And these last sad moans of the old fiddle were now known through the household. They were the ghosts of the melody of days long past. He imagined that his visits to the box were unsuspected,—that none knew of

the folly of his old fingers which could not keep themselves from touching the wires; but the voice of the violoncello had been recognized by the servants and by his daughter, and when that low wail was heard through the house,—like the last dying note of a dirge,—they would all know that Mr. Harding was visiting his ancient friend.

When the dean and Mrs. Arabin had first talked of going abroad for a long visit, it had been understood that Mr. Harding should pass the period of their absence with his other daughter at Plumstead; but when the time came he begged of Mrs. Arabin to be allowed to remain in his old rooms. "Of course I shall go backwards and forwards," he had said. "There is nothing I like so much as a change now and then." The result had been that he had gone once to Plumstead during the dean's absence. When he had thus remonstrated, begging to be allowed to remain in Barchester, Mrs. Arabin had declared her intention of giving up her tour. In telling her father of this she had not said that her altered purpose had arisen from her disinclination to leave him alone;—but he had perceived that it was so, and had then consented to be taken over to Plumstead. There was nothing, he said, which he would like so much as going over to Plumstead for four or five months. It had ended in his having his own way altogether. The Arabins had gone upon their tour, and he was left in possession of the deanery. "I should not like to die out of Barchester," he said to himself in excuse to himself for his disinclination to sojourn long under the archdeacon's roof. But, in truth, the archdeacon, who loved him well and who, after a fashion, had always been good to him,—who had always spoken of the connexion which had bound the two families together as the great blessing of his life,—was too rough in his greetings for the old man. Mr. Harding had ever mixed something of fear with his warm affection for his elder son-in-law, and now in these closing hours of his life he could not avoid a certain amount of shrinking from that loud voice,—a certain inaptitude to be quite at ease in

that commanding presence. The dean, his second son-in-law, had been a modern friend in comparison with the archdeacon; but the dean was more gentle with him; and then the dean's wife had ever been the dearest to him of human beings. It may be a doubt whether one of the dean's children was not now almost more dear, and whether in these days he did not have more free communication with that little girl than with any other human being. Her name was Susan, but he had always called her Posy, having himself invented for her that soubriquet. When it had been proposed to him to pass the winter and spring at Plumstead, the suggestion had been made alluring by a promise that Posy also should be taken to Mrs. Grantly's house. But he, as we have seen, had remained at the deanery, and Posy had remained with him.

Posy was now five years old, and could talk well, and had her own ideas of things. Posy's eyes,—hers, and no others besides her own,—were allowed to see the inhabitant of the big black case; and now that the deanery was so nearly deserted, Posy's fingers had touched the strings, and had produced an infantine moan. "Grandpa, let me do it again." Twang! It was not, however, in truth, a twang, but a sound as of a prolonged dull, almost deadly, hum-m-m-m-m! On this occasion the moan was not entirely infantine,—Posy's fingers having been something too strong,—and the case was closed and locked, and grandpapa shook his head.

"But Mrs. Baxter won't be angry," said Posy. Mrs. Baxter was the housekeeper in the deanery, and had Mr. Hardinge under her especial charge.

"No, my darling; Mrs. Baxter will not be angry, but we mustn't disturb the house."

"No," said Posy, with much of important awe in her tone; "we mustn't disturb the house; must we, grandpapa?" And so she gave in her adhesion to the closing of the case. But Posy could play cat's-cradle, and as cat's-cradle did not disturb the house at all, there was a good

deal of cat's-cradle played in these days. Posy's fingers were so soft and pretty, so small and deft, that the dear old man delighted in taking the strings from them, and in having them taken from his own by those tender little digits.

On the afternoon after the conversation respecting Grace Crawley which is recorded in the early part of this chapter, a messenger from Barchester went over to Plumstead, and a part of his mission consisted of a note from Mrs. Baxter to Mrs. Grantly, beginning, "Honoured Madam," and informing Mrs. Grantly, among other things, that her "respected papa," as Mrs. Baxter called him, was not quite so well as usual; not that Mrs. Baxter thought there was much the matter. Mr. Harding had been to the cathedral service, as was usual with him, but had come home leaning on a lady's arm, who had thought it well to stay with him at the door till it had been opened for him. After that "Miss Posy" had found him asleep, and had been unable,—or if not unable, unwilling, to wake him. "Miss Posy" had come down to Mrs. Baxter somewhat in a fright, and hence this letter had been written. Mrs. Baxter thought that there was nothing "to fright" Mrs. Grantly, and she wasn't sure that she should have written at all only that Dick was bound to go over to Plumstead with the wool; but as Dick was going, Mrs. Baxter thought it proper to send her duty, and to say that to her humble way of thinking perhaps it might be the best that Mr. Harding shouldn't go alone to the cathedral every morning. "If the dear reverend gentleman was to get a tumble, ma'am," said the letter, "it would be awkward." Then Mrs. Grantly remembered that she had left her father almost without a greeting on the previous day, and she resolved that she would go over very early on the following morning,—so early that she would be at the deanery before her father should have gone to the cathedral.

"He ought to have come over here, and not stayed there by himself," said the archdeacon, when his wife told him of her intention.

"It is too late to think of that now, my dear; and one can understand, I think, that he should not like leaving the cathedral as long as he can attend it. The truth is he does not like being out of Barchester."

"He would be much better here," said the archdeacon. "Of course you can have the carriage and go over. We can breakfast at eight; and if you can bring him back with you, do. I should tell him that he ought to come." Mrs. Grantly made no answer to this, knowing very well that she could not bring herself to go beyond the gentlest persuasion with her father, and on the next morning she was at the deanery by ten o'clock. Half-past ten was the hour at which the service began. Mrs. Baxter contrived to meet her before she saw her father, and begged her not to let it be known that any special tidings of Mr. Harding's failing strength had been sent from the deanery to Plumstead. "And how is my father?" asked Mrs. Grantly. "Well, then, ma'am," said Baxter, "in one sense he's finely. He took a morsel of early lamb to his dinner yesterday, and relished it ever so well,—only he gave Miss Posy the best part of it. And then he sat with Miss Posy quite happy for an hour or so. And then he slept in his chair; and you know, ma'am, we never wakes him. And after that old Skulpit toddled up from the hospital,"—this was Hiram's Hospital, of which establishment, in the city of Barchester, Mr. Harding had once been the warden and kind master, as has been told in former chronicles of the city,—"and your papa has said, ma'am, you know, that he is always to see any of the old men when they come up. And Skulpit is sly, and no better than he should be, and got money from your father, ma'am, I know. And then he had just a drop of tea, and after that I took him his glass of port wine with my own hands. And it touched me, ma'am, so it did, when he said, 'Oh, Mrs. Baxter, how good you are; you know well what it is I like.' And then he went to bed. I listened hard,—not from idle cur'osity, ma'am, as you, who know me, will believe, but just because it's becoming to know what he's about, as

there might be an accident, you know, ma'am." "You are very good, Mrs. Baxter, very good." "Thank ye, ma'am, for saying so. And so I listened hard; but he didn't go to his music, poor gentleman; and I think he had a quiet night. He doesn't sleep much at nights, poor gentleman, but he's very quiet; leastwise he was last night." This was the bulletin which Mrs. Baxter gave to Mrs. Grantly on that morning before Mrs. Grantly saw her father.

She found him preparing himself for his visit to the cathedral. Some year or two,—but no more,—before the date of which we are speaking, he had still taken some small part in the service; and while he had done so he had of course worn his surplice. Living so close to the cathedral,—so close that he could almost walk out of the house into the transept,—he had kept his surplice in his own room, and had gone down in his vestment. It had been a bitter day to him when he had first found himself constrained to abandon the white garment which he loved. He had encountered some failure in the performance of the slight clerical task allotted to him, and the dean had tenderly advised him to desist. He did not utter one word of remonstrance. "It will perhaps be better," the dean had said. "Yes,—it will be better," Mr. Harding had replied. "Few have had accorded to them the high privilege of serving their Master in His house for so many years,—though few more humbly, or with lower gifts." But on the following morning, and for nearly a week afterwards, he had been unable to face the minor canon and the vergers, and the old women who knew him so well, in his ordinary black garments. At last he went down with the dean, and occupied a stall close to the dean's seat,—far away from that in which he had sat for so many years,—and in this seat he had said his prayers ever since that day. And now his surplices were washed and ironed and folded and put away; but there were moments in which he would stealthily visit them, as he also stealthily visited his friend in the black wooden case. This was very melancholy, and the

sadness of it was felt by all those who lived with him; but he never alluded himself to any of those bereavements which age brought upon him. Whatever might be his regrets, he kept them ever within his own breast.

Posy was with him when Mrs. Grantly went up into his room, holding for him his hat and stick while he was engaged in brushing a suspicion of dust from his black gaiters. "Grandpapa, here is aunt Susan," said Posy. The old man looked up with something,—with some slightest sign of that habitual fear which was always aroused within his bosom by visitations from Plumstead. Had Mrs. Arabin thoroughly understood the difference in her father's feeling toward herself and toward her sister, I think she would hardly have gone forth upon any tour while he remained with her in the deanery. It is very hard sometimes to know how intensely we are loved, and of what value our presence is to those who love us! Mrs. Grantly saw the look,—did not analyse it, did not quite understand it,—but felt, as she had so often felt before, that it was not altogether laden with welcome. But all this had nothing to do with the duty on which she had come; nor did it, in the slightest degree, militate against her own affection. "Papa," she said, kissing him, "you are surprised to see me so early?"

"Well, my dear, yes;—but very glad all the same. I hope everybody is well at Plumstead?"

"Everybody, thank you, papa."

"That is well. Posy and I are getting ready for church. Are we not, Posy?"

"Grandpapa is getting ready. Mrs. Baxter won't let me go."

"No, my dear, no;—not yet, Posy. When Posy is a great girl she can go to cathedral every day. Only then, perhaps, Posy won't want to go."

"I thought that, perhaps, papa, you would sit with me a little while this morning, instead of going to morning prayers."

“Certainly, my dear,—certainly. Only I do not like not going;—for who can say how often I may be able to go again? There is so little left, Susan,—so very little left.”

After that she had not the heart to ask him to stay, and therefore she went with him. As they passed down the stairs and out of the doors she was astonished to find how weak were his footsteps,—how powerless he was against the slightest misadventure. On this very day he would have tripped at the upward step at the cathedral door had she not been with him. “Oh, papa,” she said, “indeed, indeed, you should not come here alone.” Then he apologized for his little stumble with many words and much shame, assuring her that anybody might trip on an occasion. It was purely an accident; and though it was a comfort to him to have had her arm, he was sure that he should have recovered himself even had he been alone. He always, he said, kept quite close to the wall, so that there might be no mistake,—no possibility of an accident. All this he said volubly, but with confused words, in the covered stone passage leading into the transept. And, as he thus spoke, Mrs. Grantly made up her mind that her father should never again go to the cathedral alone. He never did go again to the cathedral,—alone.

When they returned to the deanery, Mr. Harding was fluttered, weary, and unwell. When his daughter left him for a few minutes he told Mrs. Baxter, in confidence, the story of his accident, and his great grief that his daughter should have seen it. “Laws amercy, sir, it was a blessing she was with you,” said Mrs. Baxter; “it was, indeed, Mr. Harding.” Then Mr. Harding had been angry, and spoke almost crossly to Mrs. Baxter; but, before she left the room, he found an opportunity of begging her pardon,—not in a set speech to that effect, but by a little word of gentle kindness, which she had understood perfectly. “Papa,” said Mrs. Grantly to him as soon as she had succeeded in getting both Posy and Mrs. Baxter out of the room,—against the doing of which, Mr. Harding had manœuvred with all his

little impotent skill,—“Papa, you must promise me that you will not go to the cathedral again alone, till Eleanor comes home.” When he heard the sentence he looked at her with blank misery in his eyes. He made no attempt at remonstrance. He begged for no respite. The word had gone forth, and he knew that it must be obeyed. Though he would have hidden the signs of his weakness had he been able, he would not condescend to plead that he was strong. “If you think it wrong, my dear, I will not go alone,” he said. “Papa, I do; indeed, I do. Dear papa, I would not hurt you by saying it if I did not know that I am right.” He was sitting with his hand upon the table, and, as she spoke to him, she put her hand upon his, caressing it. “My dear,” he said, “you are always right.”

She then left him again for awhile, having some business out in the city, and he was alone in his room for an hour. What was there left to him now in the world? Old as he was, and in some things almost childish, nevertheless, he thought of this keenly, and some half-realized remembrance of “the lean and slippered pantaloons” flitted across his mind, causing him a pang. What was there left to him now in the world? Posy and cat’s-cradle! Then, in the midst of his regrets, as he sat with his back bent in his old easy-chair, with one arm over the shoulder of the chair, and the other hanging loose by his side, on a sudden there came across his face a smile as sweet as ever brightened the face of man or woman. He had been able to tell himself that he had no ground for complaint,—great ground rather for rejoicing and gratitude. Had not the world and all in it been good to him; had he not children who loved him, who had done him honour, who had been to him always a crown of glory, never a mark for reproach; had not his lines fallen to him in very pleasant places; was it not his happy fate to go and leave it all amidst the good words and kind loving cares of devoted friends? Whose latter days had ever been more blessed than his? And for the future—? It was as he thought of this that that smile came across his

face,—as though it were already the face of an angel. And then he muttered to himself a word or two. “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

When Mrs. Grantly returned she found him in jocund spirits. And yet she perceived that he was so weak that when he left his chair he could barely get across the room without assistance. Mrs. Baxter, indeed, had not sent to her too soon, and it was well that the prohibition had come in time to prevent some terrible accident. “Papa,” she said, “I think you had better go with me to Plumstead. The carriage is here, and I can take you home so comfortably.” But he would not allow himself to be taken on this occasion to Plumstead. He smiled and thanked her, and put his hand into hers, and repeated his promise that he would not leave the house on any occasion without assistance, and declared himself specially thankful to her for coming to him on that special morning;—but he would not be taken to Plumstead. “When the summer comes,” he said, “then, if you will have me for a few days!”

He meant no deceit, and yet he had told himself within the last hour that he should never see another summer. He could not tell even his daughter that after such a life as this, after more than fifty years spent in the ministrations of his darling cathedral, it specially behoved him to die,—as he had lived,—at Barchester. He could not say this to his eldest daughter; but had his Eleanor been at home, he could have said it to her. He thought he might yet live to see his Eleanor once again. If this could be given to him he would ask for nothing more.

On the afternoon of the next day, Mrs. Baxter wrote another letter, in which she told Mrs. Grantly that her father had declared, at his usual hour of rising that morning, that as he was not going to the cathedral he would, he thought, lie in bed a little longer. And then he had lain in bed the whole day. “And, perhaps, honoured madam, looking at all things, it’s best as he should,” said Mrs. Baxter.

CHAPTER L

Lady Lufton's Proposition

IT was now known throughout Barchester that a commission was to be held by the bishop's orders, at which inquiry would be made,—that is, ecclesiastical inquiry,—as to the guilt imputed to Mr. Crawley in the matter of Mr. Soames's cheque. Sundry rumours had gone abroad as to quarrels which had taken place on the subject among certain clergymen high in office; but these were simply rumours, and nothing was in truth known. There was no more discreet clergyman in all the diocese than Dr. Tempest, and not a word had escaped from him as to the stormy nature of that meeting in the bishop's palace, at which he had attended with the bishop,—and at which Mrs. Proudie had attended also. When it is said that the fact of this coming commission was known to all Barsetshire, allusion is of course made to that portion of the inhabitants of Barsetshire to which clerical matters were dear;—and as such matters were specially dear to the inhabitants of the Parish of Framley, the commission was discussed very eagerly in that parish, and was specially discussed by the Dowager Lady Lufton.

And there was a double interest attached to the commission in the parish of Framley by the fact that Mr. Robarts, the vicar, had been invited by Dr. Tempest to be one of the clergymen who were to assist in making the inquiry. "I also propose to ask Mr. Oriel of Greshamsbury to join us," said Dr. Tempest. "The bishop wishes to appoint the other two, and has already named Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, who are both residents in the city. Perhaps his lordship may be right in thinking it better that the matter should not be left altogether in the hands of clergymen who hold livings in the diocese. You are no doubt aware that neither Mr. Thumble nor Mr. Quiverful do hold any benefice." Mr. Robarts felt,—as everybody else did feel

who knew anything of the matter,—that Bishop Proudie was singularly ignorant in his knowledge of men, and that he showed his ignorance on this special occasion. “If he intended to name two such men he should at any rate have named three,” said Dr. Thorne. “Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful will simply be outvoted on the first day, and after that will give in their adhesion to the majority.” “Mr. Thumble, indeed!” Lady Lufton had said, with much scorn in her voice. To her thinking, it was absurd in the highest degree that such men as Dr. Tempest and her Mr. Robarts should be asked to meet Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful on a matter of ecclesiastical business. Outvoted! Of course they would be outvoted. Of course they would be so paralyzed by fear at finding themselves in the presence of real gentlemen, that they would hardly be able to vote at all. Old Lady Lufton did not in fact utter words so harsh as these; but thoughts as harsh passed through her mind. The reader therefore will understand that much interest was felt on the subject at Framley Court, where Lady Lufton lived with her son and her daughter-in-law.

“They tell me,” said Lady Lufton, “that both the arch-deacon and Dr. Tempest think it right that a commission should be held. If so, I have no doubt that it is right.”

“Mark says that the bishop could hardly do anything else,” rejoined Mrs. Robarts.

“I daresay not, my dear. I suppose the bishop has somebody near him to tell him what he may do, and what he may not do. It would be terrible to think of, if it were not so. But yet, when I hear that he has named such men as Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful, I cannot but feel that the whole diocese is disgraced.”

“Oh, Lady Lufton, that is such a strong word,” said Mrs. Robarts.

“It may be strong, but it is not the less true,” said Lady Lufton.

And from talking on the subject of the Crawleys, Lady Lufton soon advanced, first to a desire for some action,

and then to acting. "I think, my dear, I will go over and see Mrs. Crawley," said Lady Lufton the elder to Lady Lufton the younger. Lady Lufton the younger had nothing to urge against this; but she did not offer to accompany the elder lady. I attempted to explain in the early part of this story that there still existed a certain understanding between Mrs. Crawley and Lord Lufton's wife, and that kindnesses occasionally passed from Framley Court to Hogglestock Parsonage; but on this occasion young Lady Lufton,—the Lucy Robarts who had once passed certain days of her life with the Crawleys at Hogglestock,—did not choose to accompany her mother-in-law; and therefore Mrs. Robarts was invited to do so. "I think it may comfort her to know that she has our sympathy," the elder woman said to the younger as they made their journey together.

When the carriage stopped before the little wicket-gate, from whence a path led through a ragged garden from the road to Mr. Crawley's house, Lady Lufton hardly knew how to proceed. The servant came to the door of the carriage, and asked for her orders. "H—m—m, ha, yes; I think I'll send in my card;—and say that I hope Mrs. Crawley will be able to see me. Won't that be best; eh, Fanny?" Fanny, otherwise Mrs. Robarts, said that she thought that would be best; and the card and message were carried in.

It was happily the case that Mr. Crawley was not at home. Mr. Crawley was away at Hoggle End, reading to the brickmakers, or turning the mangles of their wives, or teaching them theology, or politics, or history, after his fashion. In these days he spent, perhaps, the happiest hours of his life down at Hoggle End. I say that his absence was a happy chance, because, had he been at home, he would certainly have said something, or done something, to offend Lady Lufton. He would either have refused to see her, or when seeing her he would have bade her hold her peace and not interfere with matters which did not concern her, or,—more probable still,—he would have sat still and

sullen, and have spoken not at all. But he was away, and Mrs. Crawley sent out word by the servant that she would be most proud to see her ladyship, if her ladyship would be pleased to alight. Her ladyship did alight, and walked into the parsonage, followed by Mrs. Robarts.

Grace was with her mother. Indeed Jane had been there also when the message was brought in, but she fled into back regions, overcome by shame as to her frock. Grace, I think, would have fled too, had she not been bound in honour to support her mother. Lady Lufton, as she entered, was very gracious, struggling with all the power of her womanhood so to carry herself that there should be no outwardly visible sign of her rank or her wealth,—but not altogether succeeding. Mrs. Robarts, on her first entrance, said only a word or two of greeting to Mrs. Crawley, and kissed Grace, whom she had known intimately in early years. "Lady Lufton," said Mrs. Crawley, "I am afraid this is a very poor place for you to come to; but you have known that of old, and therefore I need hardly apologize."

"Sometimes I like poor places best," said Lady Lufton. Then there was a pause, after which Lady Lufton addressed herself to Grace, seeking some subject for immediate conversation. "You have been down at Allington, my dear, have you not?" Grace, in a whisper, said that she had. "Staying with the Dales, I believe? I know the Dales well by name, and I have always heard that they are charming people."

"I like them very much," said Grace. And then there was another pause.

"I hope your husband is pretty well, Mrs. Crawley?" said Lady Lufton.

"He is pretty well,—not quite strong. I daresay you know, Lady Lufton, that he has things to vex him?" Mrs. Crawley felt that it was the need of the moment that the only possible subject of conversation in that house should be introduced; and therefore she brought it in at once, not

loving the subject, but being strongly conscious of the necessity. Lady Lufton meant to be good-natured, and therefore Mrs. Crawley would do all in her power to make Lady Lufton's mission easy to her.

"Indeed yes," said her ladyship; "we do know that."

"We feel so much for you and Mr. Crawley," said Mrs. Robarts; "and are so sure that your sufferings are unmerited." This was not discreet on the part of Mrs. Robarts, as she was the wife of one of the clergymen who had been selected to form the commission of inquiry; and so Lady Lufton told her on their way home.

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Crawley. "We must only bear it with such fortitude as God will give us. We are told that He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

"And so He does, my dear," said the old lady, very solemnly. "So He does. Surely you have felt that it is so?"

"I struggle not to complain," said Mrs. Crawley.

"I know that you struggle bravely. I hear of you, and I admire you for it, and I love you." It was still the old lady who was speaking, and now she had at last been roused out of her difficulty as to words, and had risen from her chair, and was standing before Mrs. Crawley. "It is because you do not complain, because you are so great and so good, because your character is so high, and your spirit so firm, that I could not resist the temptation of coming to you. Mrs. Crawley, if you will let me be your friend, I shall be proud of your friendship."

"Your ladyship is too good," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Do not talk to me after that fashion," said Lady Lufton. "If you do I shall be disappointed, and feel myself thrown back. You know what I mean." She paused for an answer; but Mrs. Crawley had no answer to make. She simply shook her head, not knowing why she did so. But we may know. We can understand that she had felt that the friendship offered to her by Lady Lufton was an impossibility. She had decided within her own breast that it was so, though she did not know that she had come to such

decision. "I wish you to take me at my word, Mrs. Crawley," continued Lady Lufton. "What can we do for you? We know that you are distressed."

"Yes,—we are distressed."

"And we know how cruel circumstances have been to you. Will you not forgive me for being plain?"

"I have nothing to forgive," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Lady Lufton means," said Mrs. Robarts, "that in asking you to talk openly to her of your affairs, she wishes you to remember that—— I think you know what we mean," said Mrs. Robarts, knowing very well herself what she did mean, but not knowing at all how to express herself.

"Lady Lufton is very kind," said Mrs. Crawley, "and so are you, Mrs. Robarts. I know how good you both are, and for how much it behoves me to be grateful." These words were very cold, and the voice in which they were spoken was very cold. They made Lady Lufton feel that it was beyond her power to proceed with the work of her mission in its intended spirit. It is ever so much easier to proffer kindness graciously than to receive it with grace. Lady Lufton had intended to say, "Let us be women together;— women bound by humanity, and not separated by rank, and let us open our hearts freely. Let us see how we may be of comfort to each other." And could she have succeeded in this, she would have spread out her little plans of succour with so loving a hand that she would have conquered the woman before her. But the suffering spirit cannot descend from its dignity of reticence. It has a nobility of its own, made sacred by many tears, by the flowing of streams of blood from unseen wounds, which cannot descend from its daïs to receive pity and kindness. A consciousness of undeserved woe produces a grandeur of its own, with which the high-souled sufferer will not easily part. Baskets full of eggs, pounds of eleemosynary butter, quarters of given pork, even second-hand clothing from the wardrobe of some richer sister,—even money, unsophisticated money, she could accept. She had learned to know that it

was a portion of her allotted misery to take such things,—for the sake of her children and her husband,—and to be thankful for them. She did take them, and was thankful; and in the taking she submitted herself to the rod of cruel circumstances; but she could not even yet bring herself to accept spoken pity from a stranger, and to kiss the speaker.

“Can we not do something to help you?” said Mrs. Robarts. She would not have spoken but that she perceived that Lady Lufton had completed her appeal, and that Mrs Crawley did not seem prepared to answer it.

“You have done much to help us,” said Mrs. Crawley. “The things you have sent to us have been very serviceable.”

“But we mean something more than that,” said Lady Lufton.

“I do not know what there is more,” said Mrs. Crawley. “A bit to eat and something to wear;—that seems to be all that we have to care for now.”

“But we were afraid that this coming trial must cause you so much anxiety.”

“Of course it causes anxiety;—but what can we do? It must be so. It cannot be put off, or avoided. We have made up our minds to it now, and almost wish that it would come quicker. If it were once over I think that he would be better whatever the result might be.”

Then there was another lull in the conversation, and Lady Lufton began to be afraid that her visit would be a failure. She thought that perhaps she might get on better if Grace were not in the room, and she turned over in her mind various schemes for sending her away. And perhaps her task would be easier if Mrs. Robarts also could be banished for a time. “Fanny, my dear,” she said at last, boldly, “I know you have a little plan to arrange with Miss Crawley. Perhaps you will be more likely to be successful if you can take a turn with her alone.” There was not much subtlety in her ladyship’s scheme; but it answered the proposed purpose, and the two elder ladies were soon left

face to face, so that Lady Lufton had a fair pretext for making another attempt. "Dear Mrs. Crawley," she said, "I do so long to say a word to you, but I fear that I may be thought to interfere."

"Oh, no, Lady Lufton; I have no feeling of that kind."

"I have asked your daughter and Mrs. Robarts to go out because I can speak more easily to you alone. I wish I could teach you to trust me."

"I do trust you."

"As a friend, I mean;—as a real friend. If it should be the case, Mrs. Crawley, that a jury should give a verdict against your husband,—what will you do then? Perhaps I ought not to suppose that it is possible."

"Of course we know that is possible," said Mrs. Crawley. Her voice was stern, and there was in it a tone almost of offence. As she spoke she did not look at her visitor, but sat with her face averted and her arms akimbo on the table.

"Yes;—it is possible," said Lady Lufton. "I suppose there is not one in the county who does not truly wish that it may not be so. But it is right to be prepared for all alternatives. In such case have you thought what you will do?"

"I do not know what they would do to him," said she.

"I suppose that for some time he would be——"

"Put in prison," said Mrs. Crawley, speaking very quickly, bringing out the words with a sharp eagerness that was quite unusual to her. "They will send him to gaol. Is it not so, Lady Lufton?"

"I suppose it would be so; not for long I should hope; but I presume that such would be the sentence for some short period."

"And I might not go with him?"

"No; that would be impossible."

"And the house, and the living; would they let him have them again when he came out?"

"Ah; that I cannot say. That will depend much, probably, on what these clergymen will report. I hope he will not put himself in opposition to them."

"I do not know. I cannot say. It is probable that he may do so. It is not easy for a man so injured as he has been, and one at the same time so great in intelligence, to submit himself gently to such inquiries. When ill is being done to himself or others he is very prone to oppose it."

"But these gentlemen do not wish to do him ill, Mrs. Crawley."

"I cannot say. I do not know. When I think of it I see that there is nothing but ruin on every side. What is the use of talking of it? Do not be angry, Lady Lufton, if I say that it is of no use."

"But I desire to be of use,—of real use. If it should be the case, Mrs. Crawley, that your husband should be—detained at Barchester——"

"You mean imprisoned, Lady Lufton."

"Yes, I mean imprisoned. If it should be so, then do you bring yourself and your children,—all of them,—over to Framley, and I will find a home for you while he is lost to you."

"Oh, Lady Lufton; I could not do that."

"Yes, you can. You have not heard me yet. It would not be a comfort to you in such a home as that to sit at table with people who are partly strangers to you. But there is a cottage nearly adjoining to the house, which you shall have all to yourself. The bailiff lived in it once, and others have lived in it who belong to the place; but it is empty now and it shall be made comfortable." The tears were now running down Mrs. Crawley's face, so that she could not answer a word. "Of course it is my son's property, and not mine, but he has commissioned me to say that it is most heartily at your service. He begs that in such case you will occupy it. And I beg the same. And your old friend Lucy has desired me also to ask you in her name."

"Lady Lufton, I could not do that," said Mrs. Crawley through her tears.

"You must think better of it, my dear. I do not scruple to advise you, because I am older than you, and have ex-

perience of the world." This, I think, taken in the ordinary sense of the words, was a boast on the part of Lady Lufton, for which but little true pretence existed. Lady Lufton's experience of the world at large was not perhaps extensive. Nevertheless she knew what one woman might offer to another, and what one woman might receive from another. "You would be better over with me, my dear, than you could be elsewhere. You will not misunderstand me if I say that, under such circumstances, it would do your husband good that you and your children should be under our protection during his period of temporary seclusion. We stand well in the county. Perhaps I ought not to say so, but I do not know how otherwise to explain myself; and when it is known, by the bishop and others, that you have come to us during that sad time, it will be understood that we think well of Mr. Crawley, in spite of anything that a jury may say of him. Do you see that, my dear? And we do think well of him. I have known of your husband for many years, though I have not personally had the pleasure of much acquaintance with him. He was over at Framley once at my request, and I had great occasion then to respect him. I do respect him; and I shall feel grateful to him if he will allow you to put yourself and your children under my wing, as being an old woman, should this misfortune fall upon him. We hope that it will not fall upon him; but it is always well to be provided for the worst."

In this way Lady Lufton at last made her speech and opened out the proposal with which she had come laden to Hogglestock. While she was speaking Mrs. Crawley's shoulder was still turned to her; but the speaker could see that the quick tears were pouring themselves down the cheeks of the woman whom she addressed. There was a downright honesty of thorough-going well-wishing charity about the proposition which overcame Mrs. Crawley altogether. She did not feel for a moment that it would be possible for her to go to Framley in such circumstances as those which had been suggested. As she thought of it all

at the present moment, it seemed to her that her only appropriate home during the terrible period which was coming upon her, would be under the walls of the prison in which her husband would be incarcerated. But she fully appreciated the kindness which had suggested a measure, which, if carried into execution, would make the outside world feel that her husband was respected in the county, despite the degradation to which he was subjected. She felt all this, but her heart was too full to speak.

"Say that it shall be so, my dear," continued Lady Lufton. "Just give me one nod of assent, and the cottage shall be ready for you should it so chance that you should require it."

But Mrs. Crawley did not give the nod of assent. With her face still averted, while the tears were still running down her cheeks, she muttered but a word or two. "I could not do that, Lady Lufton; I could not do that."

"You know at any rate what my wishes are, and as you become calmer you will think of it. There is quite time enough, and I am speaking of an alternative which may never happen. My dear friend Mrs. Robarts, who is now with your daughter, wishes Miss Crawley to go over to Framley Parsonage while this inquiry among the clergymen is going on. They all say it is the most ridiculous thing in all the world,—this inquiry. But the bishop you know is so silly! We all think that if Miss Crawley would go for a week or so to Framley Parsonage, that it will show how happy we all are to receive her. It should be while Mr. Robarts is employed in his part of the work. What do you say, Mrs. Crawley? We at Framley are all clearly of opinion that it will be best that it should be known that the people in the county uphold your husband. Miss Crawley would be back, you know, before the trial comes on. I hope you will let her come, Mrs. Crawley?"

But even to this proposition Mrs. Crawley could give no assent, though she expressed no direct dissent. As regarded her own feelings, she would much have preferred

to have been left to live through her misery alone; but she could not but appreciate the kindness which endeavoured to throw over her and hers in their trouble the ægis of first-rate county respectability. She was saved from the necessity of giving a direct answer to this suggestion by the return of Mrs. Robarts and Grace herself. The door was opened slowly, and they crept into the room as though they were aware that their presence would be hardly welcomed.

“Is the carriage there, Fanny?” said Lady Lufton. “It is almost time for us to think of returning home.”

Mrs. Robarts said that the carriage was standing within twenty yards of the door.

“Then I think we will make a start,” said Lady Lufton. “Have you succeeded in persuading Miss Crawley to come over to Framley in April?”

Mrs. Robarts made no answer to this, but looked at Grace; and Grace looked down upon the ground.

“I have spoken to Mrs. Crawley,” said Lady Lufton, “and they will think of it.” Then the two ladies took their leave, and walked out to their carriage.

“What does she say about your plan?” Mrs. Robarts asked.

“She is too broken-hearted to say anything,” Lady Lufton answered. “Should it happen that he is convicted, we must come over and take her. She will have no power then to resist us in anything.”

CHAPTER LI

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton Piles her Fagots

THE picture still progressed up in Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's room, and the secret was still kept, or supposed to be kept. Miss Van Siever was, at any rate, certain that her mother had heard nothing of it, and Mrs. Broughton reported from day to day that her husband had not as yet interfered. Nevertheless, there was in these days a great gloom upon the Dobbs Broughton household, so much so that Conway Dalrymple had more than once suggested to Mrs. Broughton that the work should be discontinued. But the mistress of the house would not consent to this. In answer to these offers, she was wont to declare in somewhat mysterious language, that any misery coming upon herself was matter of moment to nobody,—hardly even to herself, as she was quite prepared to encounter moral and social death without delay, if not an absolute physical demise; as to which latter alternative, she seemed to think that even that might not be so far distant as some people chose to believe. What was the cause of the gloom over the house neither Conway Dalrymple nor Miss Van Siever understood, and to speak the truth Mrs. Broughton did not quite understand the cause herself. She knew well enough, no doubt, that her husband came home always sullen, and sometimes tipsy, and that things were not going well in the City. She had never understood much about the City, being satisfied with an assurance that had come to her in early days from her friends, that there was a mine of wealth in Hook Court, from whence would always come for her use, house and furniture, a carriage and horses, dresses and jewels, which latter, if not quite real should be manufactured of the best sham substitute known. Soon after her brilliant marriage with Mr. Dobbs Broughton, she had discovered that the carriage and horses, and the sham jewels, did not lift her so completely into a terrestrial

paradise as she had taught herself to expect that they would do. Her brilliant drawing-room, with Dobbs Broughton for a companion, was not an elysium. But though she had found out early in her married life that something was still wanting to her, she had by no means confessed to herself that the carriage and horses and sham jewels were bad, and it can hardly be said that she had repented. She had endeavoured to patch up matters with a little romance, and then had fallen upon Conway Dalrymple,—meaning no harm. Indeed, love with her, as it never could have meant much good, was not likely to mean much harm. That somebody should pretend to love her, to which pretence she might reply by a pretence of friendship,—this was the little excitement which she craved, and by which she had once flattered herself that something of an elysium might yet be created for her. Mr. Dobbs Broughton had unreasonably expressed a dislike to this innocent amusement,—very unreasonably, knowing, as he ought to have known, that he himself did so very little towards providing the necessary elysium by any qualities of his own. For a few weeks this interference from her husband had enhanced the amusement, giving an additional excitement to the game. She felt herself to be a woman misunderstood and ill-used; and to some women there is nothing so charming as a little mild ill-usage, which does not interfere with their creature comforts, with their clothes, or their carriage, or their sham jewels; but suffices to afford them the indulgence of a grievance. Of late, however, Mr. Dobbs Broughton had become a little too rough in his language, and things had gone uncomfortably. She suspected that Conway Dalrymple was not the only cause of all this. She had an idea that Mr. Musselboro and Mrs. Van Siever had it in their power to make themselves unpleasant, and that they were exercising this power. Of his business in the City her husband never spoke to her, nor she to him. Her own fortune had been very small, some couple of thousand pounds or so, and she conceived that she had no pretext on which

she could, unasked, interrogate him about his money. She had no knowledge that marriage of itself had given her the right to such interference; and had such knowledge been hers she would have had no desire to interfere. She hoped that the carriage and sham jewels would be continued to her; but she did not know how to frame any question on the subject. Touching the other difficulty,—the Conway Dalrymple difficulty,—she had her ideas. The tenderness of her friendship had been trodden upon and outraged by the rough foot of an overbearing husband, and she was ill-used. She would obey. It was becoming to her as a wife that she should submit. She would give up Conway Dalrymple, and would induce him,—in spite of his violent attachment to herself,—to take a wife. She herself would choose a wife for him. She herself would, with suicidal hands, destroy the romance of her own life, since an overbearing, brutal husband demanded that it should be destroyed. She would sacrifice her own feelings, and do all in her power to bring Conway Dalrymple and Clara Van Siever together. If, after that, some poet did not immortalize her friendship in Byronic verse, she certainly would not get her due. Perhaps Conway Dalrymple would himself become a poet in order that this might be done properly. For it must be understood that, though she expected Conway Dalrymple to marry, she expected also that he should be Byronically wretched after his marriage on account of his love for herself.

But there was certainly something wrong over and beyond the Dalrymple difficulty. The servants were not as civil as they used to be, and her husband, when she suggested to him a little dinner-party, snubbed her most unmercifully. The giving of dinner-parties had been his glory, and she had made the suggestion simply with the view of pleasing him. "If the world were going round the wrong way, a woman would still want a party," he had said, sneering at her. "It was of you I was thinking, Dobbs," she replied; "not of myself. I care little for such gatherings."

After that she retired to her own room with a romantic tear in each eye, and told herself that, had chance thrown Conway Dalrymple into her way before she had seen Dobbs Broughton, she would have been the happiest woman in the world. She sat for a while looking into vacancy, and thinking that it would be very nice to break her heart. How should she set about it? Should she take to her bed and grow thin? She would begin by eating no dinner for ever so many days together. At lunch her husband was never present, and therefore the broken heart could be displayed at dinner without much positive suffering. In the meantime she would implore Conway Dalrymple to get himself married with as little delay as possible, and she would lay upon him her positive order to restrain himself from any word of affection addressed to herself. She, at any rate, would be pure, high-minded, and self-sacrificing,—although romantic and poetic also, as was her nature.

The picture was progressing, and so also, as it had come about, was the love-affair between the artist and his model. Conway Dalrymple had begun to think that he might, after all, do worse than make Clara Van Siever his wife. Clara Van Siever was handsome, and undoubtedly clever, and Clara Van Siever's mother was certainly rich. And, in addition to this, the young lady herself began to like the man into whose society she was thrown. The affair seemed to flourish, and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton should have been delighted. She told Clara, with a very serious air, that she was delighted, bidding Clara, at the same time, to be very cautious, as men were so fickle, and as Conway, though the best fellow in the world, was not, perhaps, altogether free from that common vice of men. Indeed, it might have been surmised, from a word or two which Mrs. Broughton allowed to escape, that she considered poor Conway to be more than ordinarily afflicted in that way. Miss Van Siever at first only pouted, and said that there was nothing in it. "There is something in it, my dear, certainly," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton; "and there can be no earthly reason

why there should not be a great deal in it." "There is nothing in it," said Miss Van Siever, impetuously; "and if you will continue to speak of Mr. Dalrymple in that way, I must give up the picture." "As for that," said Mrs. Broughton, "I conceive that we are both of us bound to the young man now, seeing that he has given so much time to the work." "I am not bound to him at all," said Miss Van Siever.

Mrs. Broughton also told Conway Dalrymple that she was delighted,—oh, so much delighted! He had obtained permission to come in one morning before the time of sitting, so that he might work at his canvas independently of his model. As was his custom, he made his own way upstairs and commenced his work alone,—having been expressly told by Mrs. Broughton that she would not come to him till she brought Clara with her. But she did go up to the room in which the artist was painting, without waiting for Miss Van Siever. Indeed, she was at this time so anxious as to the future welfare of her two young friends that she could not restrain herself from speaking either to the one or to the other, whenever any opportunity for such speech came round. To have left Conway Dalrymple at work upstairs without going to him was impossible to her. So she went, and then took the opportunity of expressing to her friend her ideas as to his past and future conduct.

"Yes, it is very good; very good, indeed," she said, standing before the easel, and looking at the half-completed work. "I do not know that you ever did anything better."

"I never can tell myself till a picture is finished whether it is going to be good or not," said Dalrymple, thinking really of his picture and of nothing else.

"I am sure this will be good," she said, "and I suppose it is because you have thrown so much heart into it. It is not mere industry that will produce good work, nor yet skill, nor even genius: more than this is required. The

heart of the artist must be thrust with all its gushing tides into the performance." By this time he knew all the tones of her voice and their various meanings, and immediately became aware that at the present moment she was intent upon something beyond the picture. She was preparing for a little scene, and was going to give him some advice. He understood it all, but as he was really desirous of working at his canvas, and was rather averse to having a scene at that moment, he made a little attempt to disconcert her. "It is the heart that gives success," she said, while he was considering how he might best put an extinguisher upon her romance for the occasion.

"Not at all, Mrs. Broughton; success depends on elbow-grease."

"On what, Conway?"

"On elbow-grease,—hard work, that is,—and I must work hard now if I mean to take advantage of to-day's sitting. The truth is, I don't give enough hours of work to it." And he leaned upon his stick, and daubed away briskly at the background, and then stood for a moment looking at his canvas with his head a little on one side, as though he could not withdraw his attention for a moment from the thing he was doing.

"You mean to say, Conway, that you would rather that I should not speak to you."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Broughton, I did not mean that at all."

"I won't interrupt you at your work. What I have to say is perhaps of no great moment. Indeed, words between you and me never can have much importance now. Can they, Conway?"

"I don't see that at all," said he, still working away with his brush.

"Do you not? I do. They should never amount to more,—they can never amount to more than the common, ordinary courtesies of life; what I call the greetings and goodbyings of conversation." She said this in a low, melancholy tone of voice, not intending to be in any degree jocose.

“How seldom is it that conversation between ordinary friends goes beyond that.”

“Don’t you think it does?” said Conway, stepping back and taking another look at his picture. “I find myself talking to all manner of people about all manner of things.”

“You are different from me. I cannot talk to all manner of people.”

“Politics, you know, and art, and a little scandal, and the wars, with a dozen other things, make talking easy enough, I think. I grant you this, that it is very often a great bore. Hardly a day passes that I don’t wish to cut out somebody’s tongue.”

“Do you wish to cut out my tongue, Conway?”

He began to perceive that she was determined to talk about herself, and that there was no remedy. He dreaded it, not because he did not like the woman, but from a conviction that she was going to make some comparison between herself and Clara Van Siever. In his ordinary humour he liked a little pretence at romance, and was rather good at that sort of love-making which in truth means anything but love. But just now he was really thinking of matrimony, and had on this very morning acknowledged to himself that he had become sufficiently attached to Clara Van Siever to justify him in asking her to be his wife. In his present mood he was not anxious for one of those tilts with blunted swords and half-severed lances in the lists of Cupid of which Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was so fond. Nevertheless, if she insisted that he should now descend into the arena and go through the paraphernalia of a mock tournament, he must obey her. It is the hardship of men that when called upon by women for romance, they are bound to be romantic, whether the opportunity serves them or does not. A man must produce romance, or at least submit to it, when duly summoned, even though he should have a sore-throat or a headache. He is a brute if he decline such an encounter,—and feels that, should he so decline persistently, he will ever after be treated as a

brute. There are many Potiphar's wives who never dream of any mischief, and Josephs who are very anxious to escape, though they are asked to return only whisper for whisper. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had asked him whether he wished that her tongue should be cut out, and he had of course replied that her words had always been a joy to him,—never a trouble. It occurred to him as he made his little speech that it would only have served her right if he had answered her quite in another strain; but she was a woman, and was young and pretty, and was entitled to flattery. "They have always been a joy to me," he said, repeating his last words as he strove to continue his work.

"A deadly joy," she replied, not quite knowing what she herself meant. "A deadly joy, Conway. I wish with all my heart that we had never known each other."

"I do not. I will never wish away the happiness of my life, even should it be followed by misery."

"You are a man, and if trouble comes upon you, you can bear it on your own shoulders. A woman suffers more, just because another's shoulders may have to bear the burden."

"When she has got a husband, you mean?"

"Yes,—when she has a husband."

"It's the same with a man when he has a wife." Hitherto the conversation had had so much of milk-and-water in its composition, that Dalrymple found himself able to keep it up and go on with his background at the same time. If she could only be kept in the same dim cloud of sentiment, if the hot rays of the sun of romance could be kept from breaking through the mist till Miss Van Siever should come, it might still be well. He had known her to wander about within the clouds for an hour together, without being able to find her way into the light. "It's all the same with a man when he has got a wife," he said. "Of course one has to suffer for two, when one, so to say, is two."

"And what happens when one has to suffer for three?" she asked.

"You mean when a woman has children?"

"I mean nothing of the kind, Conway; and you must know that I do not, unless your feelings are indeed blunted. But worldly success has, I suppose, blunted them."

"I rather fancy not," he said. "I think they are pretty nearly as sharp as ever."

"I know mine are. Oh, how I wish I could rid myself of them! But it cannot be done. Age will not blunt them,—I am sure of that," said Mrs. Broughton. "I wish it would."

He had determined not to talk about herself if the subject could be in any way avoided; but now he felt that he was driven up into a corner;—now he was forced to speak to her of her own personality. "You have no experience yet as to that. How can you say what age will do?"

"Age does not go by years," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "We all know that. 'His hair was grey, but not with years.' Look here, Conway," and she moved back her tresses from off her temples to show him that there were grey hairs behind. He did not see them; and had they been very visible she might not perhaps have been so ready to exhibit them. "No one can say that length of years has blanched them. I have no secrets from you about my age. One should not be grey before one has reached thirty."

"I did not see a changed hair."

"'Twas the fault of your eyes, then, for there are plenty of them. And what is it has made them grey?"

"They say that hot rooms will do it."

"Hot rooms! No, Conway, it does not come from heated atmosphere. It comes from a cold heart, a chilled heart, a frozen heart, a heart that is all ice." She was getting out of the cloud into the heat now, and he could only hope that Miss Van Siever would come soon. "The world is beginning with you, Conway, and yet you are as old as I am. It is ending with me, and yet I am as young as you are. But I do not know why I talk of all this. It is simply folly,—utter folly. I had not meant to speak of myself; but I did wish to say a few words to you of your own future. I suppose I may still speak to you as a friend?"

“I hope you will always do that.”

“Nay,—I will make no such promise. That I will always have a friend’s feeling for you, a friend’s interest in your welfare, a friend’s triumph in your success,—that I will promise. But friendly words, Conway, are sometimes misunderstood.”

“Never by me,” said he.

“No, not by you,—certainly not by you. I did not mean that. I did not expect that you should misinterpret them.” Then she laughed hysterically,—a little low, gurgling, hysterical laugh; and after that she wiped her eyes, and then she smiled, and then she put her hand very gently upon his shoulder. “Thank God, Conway, we are quite safe there,—are we not?”

He had made a blunder, and it was necessary that he should correct it. His watch was lying in the trough of his easel, and he looked at it and wondered why Miss Van Siever was not there. He had tripped, and he must make a little struggle and recover his step. “As I said before, it shall never be misunderstood by me. I have never been vain enough to suppose for a moment that there was any other feeling,—not for a moment. You women can be so careful, while we men are always off our guard! A man loves because he cannot help it; but a woman has been careful, and answers him—with friendship. Perhaps I am wrong to say that I never thought of winning anything more; but I never think of winning more now.” Why the mischief didn’t Miss Van Siever come! In another five minutes, despite himself, he would be on his knees, making a mock declaration, and she would be pouring forth the vial of her mock wrath, or giving him mock counsel as to the restraint of his passion. He had gone through it all before, and was tired of it; but for his life he did not know how to help himself.

“Conway,” said she, gravely, “how dare you address me in such language?”

“Of course it is very wrong; I know that.”

"I'm not speaking of myself, now. I have learned to think so little of myself, as even to be indifferent to the feeling of the injury you are doing me. My life is a blank, and I almost think that nothing can hurt me further. I have not heart left enough to break; no, not enough to be broken. It is not of myself that I am thinking, when I ask you how you dare to address me in such language. Do you not know that it is an injury to another?"

"To what other?" asked Conway Dalrymple, whose mind was becoming rather confused, and who was not quite sure whether the other one was Mr. Dobbs Broughton, or somebody else.

"To that poor girl who is coming here now, who is devoted to you, and to whom, I do not doubt, you have uttered words which ought to have made it impossible for you to speak to me as you spoke not a moment since."

Things were becoming very grave and difficult. They would have been very grave, indeed, had not some god saved him by sending Miss Van Siever to his rescue at this moment. He was beginning to think what he would say in answer to the accusation now made, when his eager ear caught the sound of her step upon the stairs; and before the pause in the conversation which the circumstances admitted had given place to the necessity for further speech, Miss Van Siever had knocked at the door and had entered the room. He was rejoiced, and I think that Mrs. Broughton did not regret the interference. It is always well that these little dangerous scenes should be brought to sudden ends. The last details of such romances, if drawn out to their natural conclusions, are apt to be uncomfortable, if not dull. She did not want him to go down on his knees, knowing that the getting up again is always awkward.

"Clara, I began to think you were never coming," said Mrs. Broughton, with her sweetest smile.

"I began to think so myself also," said Clara. "And I believe this must be the last sitting, or, at any rate, the last but one."

"Is anything the matter at home?" said Mrs. Broughton, clasping her hands together.

"Nothing very much; mamma asked me a question or two this morning, and I said I was coming here. Had she asked me why, I should have told her."

"But what did she ask? What did she say?"

"She does not always make herself very intelligible. She complains without telling you what she complains of. But she muttered something about artists which was not complimentary, and I suppose, therefore, that she has a suspicion. She stayed ever so late this morning, and we left the house together. She will ask some direct question tonight, or before long, and then there will be an end of it."

"Let us make the best of our time then," said Dalrymple; and the sitting was arranged; Miss Van Siever went down on her knees with her hammer in her hand, and the work began. Mrs. Broughton had twisted a turban round Clara's head, as she always did on these occasions, and assisted to arrange the drapery. She used to tell herself as she did so, that she was like Isaac, piling the fagots for her own sacrifice. Only Isaac had piled them in ignorance, and she piled them conscious of the sacrificial flames. And Isaac had been saved; whereas it was impossible that the catching of any ram in any thicket could save her. But, nevertheless, she arranged the drapery with all her skill, piling the fagots ever so high for her own pyre. In the meantime Conway Dalrymple painted away, thinking more of his picture than he did of one woman or of the other.

After a while, when Mrs. Broughton had piled the fagots as high as she could pile them, she got up from her seat and prepared to leave the room. Much of the piling consisted, of course, in her own absence during a portion of these sittings. "Conway," she said, as she went, "if this is to be the last sitting, or the last but one, you should make the most of it." Then she threw upon him a very peculiar glance over the head of the kneeling Jael, and withdrew. Jael, who in those moments would be thinking more of

the fatigue of her position than of anything else, did not at all take home to herself the peculiar meaning of her friend's words. Conway Dalrymple understood them thoroughly, and thought that he might as well take the advice given to him. He had made up his mind to propose to Miss Van Siever, and why should he not do so now? He went on with his brush for a couple of minutes without saying a word, working as well as he could work, and then resolved that he would at once begin the other task. "Miss Van Siever," he said, "I'm afraid you are tired?"

"Not more than usually tired. It is fatiguing to be slaying Sisera by the hour together. I do get to hate this block." The block was the dummy by which the form of Sisera was supposed to be typified.

"Another sitting will about finish it," said he, "so that you need not positively distress yourself now. Will you rest yourself for a minute or two?" He had already perceived that the attitude in which Clara was posed before him was not one in which an offer of marriage could be received and replied to with advantage.

"Thank you, I am not tired yet," said Clara, not changing the fixed glance of national wrath with which she regarded her wooden Sisera as she held her hammer on high.

"But I am. There; we will rest for a moment." Dalrymple was aware that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, though she was very assiduous in piling her fagots, never piled them for long together. If he did not make haste she would be back upon them before he could get his word spoken. When he put down his brush, and got up from his chair, and stretched out his arm as a man does when he ceases for a moment from his work, Clara of course got up also, and seated herself. She was used to her turban and her drapery, and therefore thought not of it at all; and he also was used to it, seeing her in it two or three times a week; but now that he intended to accomplish a special purpose, the turban and the drapery seemed to be in the way. "I do so hope you will like the picture," he said, as he was thinking of this.

“I don’t think I shall. But you will understand that it is natural that a girl should not like herself in such a portraiture as that.”

“I don’t know why. I can understand that you specially should not like the picture; but I think that most women in London in your place would at any rate say that they did.”

“Are you angry with me?”

“What; for telling the truth? No, indeed.” He was standing opposite to his easel, looking at the canvas, shifting his head about so as to change the lights, and observing critically this blemish and that; and yet he was all the while thinking how he had best carry out his purpose. “It will have been a prosperous picture to me,” he said at last, “if it leads to the success of which I am ambitious.”

“I am told that all you do is successful now,—merely because you do it. That is the worst of success.”

“What is the worst of success?”

“That when won by merit it leads to further success, for the gaining of which no merit is necessary.”

“I hope it may be so in my case. If it is not I shall have a very poor chance. Clara, I think you must know that I am not talking about my pictures.”

“I thought you were.”

“Indeed I am not. As for success in my profession, far as I am from thinking I merit it, I feel tolerably certain that I shall obtain it.”

“You have obtained it.”

“I am in the way to do so. Perhaps one out of ten struggling artists is successful, and for him the profession is very charming. It is certainly a sad feeling that there is so much of chance in the distribution of the prizes. It is a lottery. But one cannot complain of that when one has drawn the prize.” Dalrymple was not a man without self-possession, nor was he readily abashed, but he found it easier to talk of his possession than to make his offer. The turban was his difficulty. He had told himself over and over again within the last five minutes, that he would have long since

said what he had to say had it not been for the turban. He had been painting all his life from living models,—from women dressed up in this or that costume, to suit the necessities of his picture,—but he had never made love to any of them. They had been simply models to him, and now he found that there was a difficulty. "Of that prize," he said, "I have made myself tolerably sure; but as to the other prize, I do not know. I wonder whether I am to have that." Of course Miss Van Siever understood well what was the prize of which he was speaking; and as she was a young woman with a will and purpose of her own, no doubt she was already prepared with an answer. But it was necessary that the question should be put to her in properly distinct terms. Conway Dalrymple certainly had not put his question in properly distinct terms at present. She did not choose to make any answer to his last words; and therefore simply suggested that as time was pressing he had better go on with his work. "I am quite ready now," said she.

"Stop half a moment. How much more you are thinking of the picture than I am! I do not care twopence for the picture. I will slit the canvas from top to bottom without a groan,—without a single inner groan,—if you will let me."

"For heaven's sake do nothing of the kind! Why should you?"

"Just to show you that it is not for the sake of the picture that I come here. Clara——" Then the door was opened, and Isaac appeared, very weary, having been piling fagots with assiduity, till human nature could pile no more. Conway Dalrymple, who had made his way almost up to Clara's seat, turned round sharply towards his easel, in anger at having been disturbed. He should have been more grateful for all that his Isaac had done for him, and have recognized the fact that the fault had been with himself. Mrs. Broughton had been twelve minutes out of the room. She had counted them to be fifteen,—having no doubt made a mistake as to three,—and had told herself that with such a one as Conway Dalrymple, with so much of the work ready

done to his hand for him, fifteen minutes should have been amply sufficient. When we reflect what her own thoughts must have been during the interval,—what it is to have to pile up such fagots as those, how she was, as it were, giving away a fresh morsel of her own heart during each minute that she allowed Clara and Conway Dalrymple to remain together, it cannot surprise us that her eyes should have become dizzy, and that she should not have counted the minutes with accurate correctness. Dalrymple turned to his picture angrily, but Miss Van Siever kept her seat and did not show the slightest emotion.

“My friends,” said Mrs. Broughton, “this will not do. This is not working; this is not sitting.”

“Mr. Dalrymple has been explaining to me the precarious nature of an artist’s profession,” said Clara.

“It is not precarious with him,” said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, sententiously.

“Not in a general way, perhaps; but to prove the truth of his words he was going to treat Jael worse than Jael treats Sisera.”

“I was going to slit the picture from the top to the bottom.”

“And why?” said Mrs. Broughton, putting up her hands to heaven in tragic horror.

“Just to show Miss Van Siever how little I care about it.”

“And how little you care about her, too,” said Mrs. Broughton.

“She might take that as she liked.” After this there was another genuine sitting, and the real work went on as though there had been no episode. Jael fixed her face, and held her hammer as though her mind and heart were solely bent on seeming to be slaying Sisera. Dalrymple turned his eyes from the canvas to the model, and from the model to the canvas, working with his hand all the while, as though that last pathetic “Clara” had never been uttered; and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton reclined on a sofa, looking at

them and thinking of her own singularly romantic position, till her mind was filled with a poetic frenzy. In one moment she resolved that she would hate Clara as woman was never hated by woman; and then there were daggers, and poison-cups, and strangling cords in her eye. In the next she was as firmly determined that she would love Mrs. Conway Dalrymple as woman never was loved by woman; and then she saw herself kneeling by a cradle, and tenderly nursing a baby, of which Conway was to be the father and Clara the mother. And so she went to sleep.

For some time Dalrymple did not observe this; but at last there was a little sound,—even the ill-nature of Miss Demolines could hardly have called it a snore,—and he became aware that for practical purposes he and Miss Van Siever were again alone together. “Clara,” he said, in a whisper. Mrs. Broughton instantly aroused herself from her slumbers, and rubbed her eyes. “Dear, dear, dear,” she said, “I declare it’s past one. I’m afraid I must turn you both out. One more sitting, I suppose, will finish it, Conway?”

“Yes, one more,” said he. It was always understood that he and Clara should not leave the house together, and therefore he remained painting when she left the room. “And now, Conway,” said Mrs. Broughton, “I suppose that all is over?”

“I don’t know what you mean by all being over.”

“No,—of course not. You look at it in another light, no doubt. Everything is beginning for you. But you must pardon me, for my heart is distracted,—distracted,—distracted!” Then she sat down upon the floor, and burst into tears. What was he to do? He thought that the woman should either give him up altogether, or not give him up. All this fuss about it was irrational! He would not have made love to Clara Van Siever in her room if she had not told him to do so!

“Maria,” he said, in a very grave voice, “any sacrifice that is required on my part on your behalf I am ready to make.”

"No, sir; the sacrifices shall all be made by me. It is the part of a woman to be ever sacrificial!" Poor Mrs. Dobbs Broughton! "You shall give up nothing. The world is at your feet, and you shall have everything,—youth, beauty, wealth, station, love,—love; and friendship also, if you will accept it from one so poor, so broken, so secluded as I shall be." At each of the last words there had been a desperate sob; and as she was still crouching in the middle of the room, looking up into Dalrymple's face while he stood over her, the scene was one which had much in it that transcended the doings of everyday life, much that would be ever memorable, and much, I have no doubt, that was thoroughly enjoyed by the principal actor. As for Conway Dalrymple, he was so second-rate a personage in the whole thing, that it mattered little whether he enjoyed it or not. I don't think he did enjoy it. "And now, Conway," she said, "I will give you some advice. And when in after-days you shall remember this interview, and reflect how that advice was given you,—with what solemnity,"—here she clasped both her hands together,—"I think that you will follow it. Clara Van Siever will now become your wife."

"I do not know that at all," said Dalrymple.

"Clara Van Siever will now become your wife," repeated Mrs. Broughton in a louder voice, impatient of opposition. "Love her. Cleave to her. Make her flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. But rule her! Yes, rule her! Let her be your second self, but not your first self. Rule her. Love her. Cleave to her. Do not leave her alone, to feed on her own thoughts as I have done,—as I have been forced to do. Now go. No, Conway, not a word; I will not hear a word. You must go, or I must." Then she rose quickly from her lowly attitude, and prepared herself for a dart at the door. It was better by far that he should go, and so he went.

An American when he has spent a pleasant day will tell you that he has had "a good time." I think that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, if she had ever spoken the truth of that day's

employment, would have acknowledged that she had had "a good time." I think that she enjoyed her morning's work. But as for Conway Dalrymple, I doubt whether he did enjoy his morning's work. "A man may have too much of this sort of thing, and then he becomes very sick of his cake." Such was the nature of his thoughts as he returned to his own abode.

CHAPTER LII

Why don't You have an "It" for Your Self?

OF course it came to pass that Lily Dale and Emily Dunstable were soon very intimate, and that they saw each other every day. Indeed, before long they would have been living together in the same house had it not been that the squire had felt reluctant to abandon the independence of his own lodgings. When Mrs. Thorne had pressed her invitation for the second, and then for the third time, asking them both to come to her large house, he had begged his niece to go and leave him alone. "You need not regard me," he had said, speaking not with the whining voice of complaint, but with that thin tinge of melancholy which was usual to him. "I am so much alone down at Alllington, that you need not mind leaving me." But Lily would not go on those terms, and therefore they still lived together in the lodgings. Nevertheless Lily was every day at Mrs. Thorne's house, and thus a great intimacy grew up between the girls. Emily Dunstable had neither brother nor sister, and Lily's nearest male relative in her own degree was now Miss Dunstable's betrothed husband. It was natural therefore that they should at any rate try to like each other. It afterwards came to pass that Lily did go to Mrs. Thorne's house, and she stayed there for awhile; but when that occurred the squire had gone back to Alllington.

Among other generous kindnesses Mrs. Thorne insisted that Bernard should hire a horse for his cousin Lily. Emily Dunstable rode daily, and of course Captain Dale rode with her;—and now Lily joined the party. Almost before she knew what was being done she found herself provided with hat and habit and horse and whip. It was a way with Mrs. Thorne that they who came within the influence of her immediate sphere should be made to feel that the comforts and luxuries arising from her wealth belonged to a common stock, and were the joint property of them all. Things were not offered and taken and talked about, but they made their appearance, and were used as a matter of course. If you go to stay at a gentleman's house you understand that, as a matter of course, you will be provided with meat and drink. Some hosts furnish you also with cigars. A small number give you stabling and forage for your horse; and a very select few mount you on hunting days, and send you out with a groom and a second horse. Mrs. Thorne went beyond all others in this open-handed hospitality. She had enormous wealth at her command, and had but few of those all-absorbing drains upon wealth which in this country make so many rich men poor. She had no family property,—no place to keep up in which she did not live. She had no retainers to be maintained because they were retainers. She had neither sons nor daughters. Consequently she was able to be lavish in her generosity; and as her heart was very lavish, she would have given her friends gold to eat had gold been good for eating. Indeed there was no measure in her giving,—unless when the idea came upon her that the recipient of her favours was trading on them. Then she could hold her hand very stoutly.

Lily Dale had not liked the idea of being fitted out thus expensively. A box at the opera was all very well, as it was not procured especially for her. And tickets for other theatres did not seem to come unnaturally for a night or two. But her spirit had militated against the hat and the habit and the horse. The whip was a little present from

Emily Dunstable, and that of course was accepted with a good grace. Then there came the horse,—as though from the heavens; there seemed to be ten horses, twenty horses, if anybody needed them. All these things seemed to flow naturally into Mrs. Thorne's establishment, like air through the windows. It was very pleasant, but Lily hesitated when she was told that a habit was to be given to her. "My dear old aunt insists," said Emily Dunstable. "Nobody ever thinks of refusing anything from her. If you only knew what some people will take, and some people will even ask, who have nothing to do with her at all!" "But I have nothing to do with her,—in that way I mean," said Lily. "Oh, yes, you have," said Emily. "You and Bernard are as good as brother and sister, and Bernard and I are as good as man and wife, and my aunt and I are as good as mother and daughter. So you see, in a sort of a way you are a child of the house." So Lily accepted the habit; but made a stand at the hat, and paid for that out of her own pocket. When the squire had seen Lily on horseback he asked her questions about it. "It was a hired horse, I suppose?" he said. "I think it came direct from heaven," said Lily. "What do you mean, Lily?" said the squire, angrily. "I mean that when people are so rich and good-natured as Mrs. Thorne it is no good inquiring where things come from. All that I know is that the horses come out of Potts' livery-stable. They talk of Potts as if he were a good-natured man who provides horses for the world without troubling anybody." Then the squire spoke to Bernard about it, saying that he should insist on defraying his niece's expenses. But Bernard swore that he could give his uncle no assistance. "I would not speak to her about such a thing for all the world," said Bernard. "Then I shall," said the squire.

In those days Lily thought much of Johnny Eames,—gave to him perhaps more of that thought which leads to love than she had ever given him before. She still heard the Crawley question discussed every day. Mrs. Thorne, as we all know, was at this time a Barsetshire personage,

and was of course interested in Barsetshire subjects; and she was specially anxious in the matter, having strong hopes with reference to the marriage of Major Grantly and Grace, and strong hopes also that Grace's father might escape the fangs of justice. The Crawley case was constantly in Lily's ears, and as constantly she heard high praise awarded to Johnny for his kindness in going after the Arabins. "He must be a fine young fellow," said Mrs. Thorne, "and we'll have him down at Challicotes some day. Old Lord De Guest found him out and made a friend of him, and old Lord De Guest was no fool." Lily was not altogether free from a suspicion that Mrs. Thorne knew the story of Johnny's love and was trying to serve Johnny, —as other people had tried to do, very ineffectually. When this suspicion came upon her she would shut her heart against her lover's praises, and swear that she would stand by those two letters which she had written in her book at home. But the suspicion would not be always there, and there did come upon her a conviction that her lover was more esteemed among men and women than she had been accustomed to believe. Her cousin, Bernard Dale, who certainly was regarded in the world as somebody, spoke of him as his equal; whereas in former days Bernard had always regarded Johnny Eames as standing low in the world's regard. Then Lily, when alone, would remember a certain comparison which she once made between Adolphus Crosbie and John Eames, when neither of the men had as yet pleaded his cause to her, and which had been very much in favour of the former. She had then declared that Johnny was a "mere clerk." She had a higher opinion of him now, —a much higher opinion, even though he could never be more to her than a friend.

In these days Lily's new ally, Emily Dunstable, seemed to Lily to be so happy! There was in Emily a complete realization of that idea of ante-nuptial blessedness of which Lily had often thought so much. Whatever Emily did she did for Bernard; and, to give Captain Dale his due, he re-

ceived all the sweets which were showered upon him with becoming signs of gratitude. I suppose it is always the case at such times that the girl has the best of it, and on this occasion Emily Dunstable certainly made the most of her happiness. "I do envy you," Lily said one day. The acknowledgment seemed to have been extorted from her involuntarily. She did not laugh as she spoke, or follow up what she had said with other words intended to take away the joke of what she had uttered,—had it been a joke; but she sat silent, looking at the girl who was re-arranging flowers which Bernard had brought to her.

"I can't give him up to you, you know," said Emily.

"I don't envy you him, but 'it,'" said Lily.

"Then go and get an 'it' for yourself. Why don't you have an 'it' for yourself? You can have an 'it' to-morrow, if you like,—or two or three, if all that I hear is true."

"No, I can't," said Lily. "Things have gone wrong with me. Don't ask me anything more about it. Pray don't. I shan't speak of it if you do."

"Of course I will not if you tell me I must not."

"I do tell you so. I have been a fool to say anything about it. However, I have got over my envy now, and am ready to go out with your aunt. Here she is."

"Things have gone wrong with me." She repeated the same words to herself over and over again. With all the efforts which she had made she could not quite reconcile herself to the two letters which she had written in the book. This coming up to London, and riding in the Park, and going to the theatres, seemed to unsettle her. At home she had schooled herself down into quiescence, and made herself think that she believed that she was satisfied with the prospects of her life. But now she was all astray again, doubting about herself, hankering after something over and beyond that which seemed to be allotted to her,—but, nevertheless, assuring herself that she never would accept of anything else.

I must not, if I can help it, let the reader suppose that she

was softening her heart to John Eames because John Eames was spoken well of in the world. But with all of us, in the opinion which we form of those around us, we take unconsciously the opinion of others. A woman is handsome because the world says so. Music is charming to us because it charms others. We drink our wines with other men's palates, and look at our pictures with other men's eyes. When Lily heard John Eames praised by all around her, it could not be but that she should praise him too,—not out loud, as others did, but in the silence of her heart. And then his constancy to her had been so perfect! If that other one had never come! If it could be that she might begin again, and that she might be spared that episode in her life which had brought him and her together!

"When is Mr. Eames going to be back?" Mrs. Thorne said at dinner one day. On this occasion the squire was dining at Mrs. Thorne's house; and there were three or four others there,—among them a Mr. Harold Smith, who was in Parliament, and his wife, and John Eames's especial friend, Sir Raffle Buffle. The question was addressed to the squire, but the squire was slow to answer, and it was taken up by Sir Raffle Buffle.

"He'll be back on the 15th," said the knight, "unless he means to play truant. I hope he won't do that, as his absence has been a terrible inconvenience to me." Then Sir Raffle explained that John Eames was his private secretary, and that Johnny's journey to the Continent had been made with, and could not have been made without, his sanction. "When I came to hear the story, of course I told him that he must go. 'Eames,' I said, 'take the advice of a man who knows the world. Circumstanced as you are, you are bound to go.' And he went."

"Upon my word that was very good-natured of you," said Mrs. Thorne.

"I never keep a fellow to his desk who has really got important business elsewhere," said Sir Raffle. "The country, I say, can afford to do as much as that for her servants. But

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then I like to know that the business is business. One
doesn't choose to be humbugged."

"I daresay you are humbugged, as you call it, very often,"
said Harold Smith.

"Perhaps so; perhaps I am; perhaps that is the opinion
which they have of me at the Treasury. But you were hardly
long enough there, Smith, to have learned much about it, I
should say."

"I don't suppose I should have known much about it,
as you call it, if I had stayed till Doomsday."

"I daresay not; I daresay not. Men who begin as late as
you did never know what official life really means. Now
I've been at it all my life, and I think I do understand it."

"It's not a profession I should like unless where it's
joined with politics," said Harold Smith.

"But then it's apt to be so short," said Sir Raffle Buffle.
Now it had happened once in the life of Mr. Harold Smith
that he had been in a Ministry, but, unfortunately, that
Ministry had gone out almost within a week of the time of
Mr. Smith's adhesion. Sir Raffle and Mr. Smith had known
each other for many years, and were accustomed to make
civil little speeches to each other in society.

"I'd sooner be a horse in a mill than have to go to an
office every day," said Mrs. Smith, coming to her husband's
assistance. "You, Sir Raffle, have kept yourself fresh and
pleasant through it all; but who besides you ever did?"

"I hope I am fresh," said Sir Raffle; "and as for pleasant-
ness, I will leave that for you to determine."

"There can be but one opinion," said Mrs. Thorne.

The conversation had strayed away from John Eames,
and Lily was disappointed. It was a pleasure to her when
people talked of him in her hearing, and as a question or
two had been asked about him, making him the hero of the
moment, it seemed to her that he was being robbed of his
due when the little amenities between Mr. and Mrs. Harold
Smith and Sir Raffle banished his name from the circle.
Nothing more, however, was said of him at dinner, and I

fear that he would have been altogether forgotten throughout the evening, had not Lily herself referred,—not to him, which she could not possibly have been induced to do,—but to the subject of his journey. “I wonder whether poor Mr. Crawley will be found guilty?” she said to Sir Raffle up in the drawing room.

“I am afraid he will; I am afraid he will,” said Sir Raffle; “and I fear, my dear Miss Dale, that I must go further than that. I fear I must express an opinion that he is guilty.”

“Nothing will ever make me think so,” said Lily.

“Ladies are always tender-hearted,” said Sir Raffle; “and especially young ladies,—and especially pretty young ladies. I do not wonder that such should be your opinion. But you see, Miss Dale, a man of business has to look at these things in a business light. What I want to know is, where did he get the cheque? He is bound to be explicit in answering that before anybody can acquit him.”

“That is just what Mr. Eames has gone abroad to learn.”

“It is very well for Eames to go abroad,—though, upon my word, I don’t know whether I should not have given him different advice if I had known how much I was to be tormented by his absence. The thing couldn’t have happened at a more unfortunate time;—the Ministry going out, and everything. But, as I was saying, it is all very well for him to do what he can. He is related to them, and is bound to save the honour of his relations if it be possible. I like him for going. I always liked him. As I said to my friend De Guest, ‘That young man will make his way.’ And I rather fancy that the chance word which I spoke then to my valued old friend was not thrown away in Eames’s favour. But, my dear Miss Dale, where did Mr. Crawley get that cheque? That’s what I want to know. If you can tell me that, then I can tell you whether or no he will be acquitted.”

Lily did not feel a strong prepossession in favour of Sir Raffle, in spite of his praise of John Eames. The harsh voice of the man annoyed her, and his egotism offended

her. When, much later in the evening, his character came on for discussion between herself and Mrs. Thorne and Emily Dunstable, she had not a word to say in his favour. But still she had been pleased to meet him, because he was the man with whom Johnny's life was most specially concerned. I think that a portion of her dislike to him arose from the fact that in continuing the conversation he did not revert to his private secretary, but preferred to regale her with stories of his own doings in wonderful cases which had partaken of interest similar to that which now attached itself to Mr. Crawley's case. He had known a man who had stolen a hundred pounds, and had never been found out; and another man who had been arrested for stealing two-and-sixpence which was found afterwards sticking to a bit of butter at the bottom of a plate. Mrs. Thorne had heard all this, and had answered him, "Dear me, Sir Raffle," she had said, "what a great many thieves you have had among your acquaintance!" This had rather disconcerted him, and then there had been no more talking about Mr. Crawley.

It had been arranged on this morning that Mr. Dale should return to Allington and leave Lily with Mrs. Thorne. Some special need of his presence at home, real or assumed, had arisen, and he had declared that he must shorten his stay in London by about half the intended period. The need would not have been so pressing, probably, had he not felt that Lily would be more comfortable with Mrs. Thorne than in his lodgings in Sackville Street. Lily had at first declared that she would return with him, but everybody had protested against this. Emily Dunstable had protested against it very stoutly; Mrs. Dale herself had protested against it by letter; and Mrs. Thorne's protest had been quite imperious in its nature. "Indeed, my dear, you'll do nothing of the kind. I'm sure your mother wouldn't wish it. I look upon it as quite essential that you and Emily should learn to know each other." "But we do know each other; don't we, Emily?" said Lily. "Not quite well yet,"

said Emily. Then Lily had laughed, and so the matter was settled. And now, on this present occasion, Mr. Dale was at Mrs. Thorne's house for the last time. His conscience had been perplexed about Lily's horse, and if anything was to be said it must be said now. The subject was very disagreeable to him, and he was angry with Bernard because Bernard had declined to manage it for him after his own fashion. But he had told himself so often that anything was better than a pecuniary obligation, that he was determined to speak his mind to Mrs. Thorne, and to beg her to allow him to have his way. So he waited till the Harold Smiths were gone, and Sir Raffle Buffle, and then, when Lily was apart with Emily,—for Bernard Dale had left them,—he found himself at last alone with Mrs. Thorne.

“I can't be too much obliged to you,” he said, “for your kindness to my girl.”

“Oh, laws, that's nothing,” said Mrs. Thorne. “We look on her as one of us now.”

“I'm sure she is grateful,—very grateful; and so am I. She and Bernard have been brought up so much together that it is very desirable that she should be not unknown to Bernard's wife.”

“Exactly,—that's just what I mean. Blood's thicker than water; isn't it? Emily's child, if she has one, will be Lily's cousin.”

“Her first cousin once removed,” said the squire, who was accurate in these matters. Then he drew himself up in his seat and compressed his lips together, and prepared himself for his task. It was very disagreeable. Nothing, he thought, could be more disagreeable. “I have a little thing to speak about,” he said at last, “which I hope will not offend you.”

“About Lily?”

“Yes; about Lily.”

“I'm not very easily offended, and I don't know how I could possibly be offended about her.”

“I'm an old-fashioned man, Mrs. Thorne, and don't

know much about the ways of the world. I have always been down in the country, and maybe I have prejudices. You won't refuse to humour one of them, I hope?"

"You're beginning to frighten me, Mr. Dale; what is it?"

"About Lily's horse."

"Lily's horse! What about her horse? I hope he's not vicious?"

"She is riding every day with your niece," said the squire, thinking it best to stick to his own point.

"It will do her all the good in the world," said Mrs. Thorne.

"Very likely. I don't doubt it. I do not in the least disapprove her riding. But——"

"But what, Mr. Dale?"

"I should be so much obliged if I might be allowed to pay the livery-stable keeper's bill."

"Oh, laws a' mercy."

"I daresay it may sound odd, but as I have a fancy about it, I'm sure you'll gratify me."

"Of course I will. I'll remember it. I'll make it all right with Bernard. Bernard and I have no end of accounts,—or shall have before long,—and we'll make an item of it. Then you can arrange with Bernard afterwards."

Mr. Dale as he got up to go away felt that he was beaten, but he did not know how to carry the battle any further on that occasion. He could not take out his purse and put down the cost of the horse on the table. "I will then speak to my nephew about it," he said, very gravely, as he went away. And he did speak to his nephew about it, and even wrote to him more than once. But it was all to no purpose. Mr. Potts could not be induced to give a separate bill, and, —so said Bernard,—swore at last that he would furnish no account to anybody for horses that went to Mrs. Thorne's door except to Mrs. Thorne herself.

That night Lily took leave of her uncle and remained at Mrs. Thorne's house. As things were now arranged she

would, no doubt, be in London when John Eames returned. If he should find her in town—and she told herself that if she was in town he certainly would find her,—he would, doubtless, repeat to her the offer he had so often made before. She never ventured to tell herself that she doubted as to the answer to be made to him. The two letters were written in the book, and must remain there. But she felt that she would have had more courage for persistency down at Allington than she would be able to summon to her assistance up in London. She knew she would be weak, should she be found by him alone in Mrs. Thorne's drawing-room. It would be better for her to make some excuse and go home. She was resolved that she would not become his wife. She could not extricate herself from the dominion of a feeling which she believed to be love for another man. She had given a solemn promise both to her mother and to John Eames that she would not marry that other man; but in doing so she had made a solemn promise to herself that she would not marry John Eames. She had sworn it and would keep her oath. And yet she regretted it! In writing home to her mother the next day, she told Mrs. Dale that all the world was speaking well of John Eames,—that John had won for himself a reputation of his own, and was known far and wide to be a noble fellow. She could not keep herself from praising John Eames, though she knew that such praise might, and would, be used against her at some future time. "Though I cannot love him I will give him his due," she said to herself.

"I wish you would make up your mind to have an 'it' for yourself," Emily Dunstable said to her again that night; "a nice 'it,' so that I could make a friend, perhaps a brother, of him."

"I shall never have an 'it,' if I live to be a hundred," said Lily Dale.

CHAPTER LIII

Rotten Row

LILY had heard nothing as to the difficulty about her horse, and could therefore enjoy her exercise without the drawback of feeling that her uncle was subjected to an annoyance. She was in the habit of going out every day with Bernard and Emily Dunstable, and their party was generally joined by others who would meet them at Mrs. Thorne's house. For Mrs. Thorne was a very hospitable woman, and there were many who liked well enough to go to her house. Late in the afternoon there would be a great congregation of horses before the door,—sometimes as many as a dozen; and then the cavalcade would go off into the Park, and there it would become scattered. As neither Bernard nor Miss Dunstable were unconscionable lovers, Lily in these scatterings did not often find herself neglected or lost. Her cousin would generally remain with her, and as in those days she had no "it" of her own she was well pleased that he should do so.

But it so happened that on a certain afternoon she found herself riding in Rotten Row alone with a certain stout gentleman whom she constantly met at Mrs. Thorne's house. His name was Onesiphorus Dunn, and he was usually called Siph by his intimate friends. It had seemed to Lily that everybody was an intimate friend of Mr. Dunn's, and she was in daily fear lest she should make a mistake and call him Siph herself. Had she done so it would not have mattered in the least. Mr. Dunn, had he observed it at all, would neither have been flattered nor angry. A great many young ladies about London did call him Siph, and to him it was quite natural that they should do so. He was an Irishman, living on the best of everything in the world, with apparently no fortune of his own, and certainly never earning anything. Everybody liked him, and it was admitted on all sides that there was no safer friend in the

world, either for young ladies or young men, than Mr. Onesiphorus Dunn. He did not borrow money, and he did not encroach. He did like being asked out to dinner, and he did think that they to whom he gave the light of his countenance in town owed him the return of a week's run in the country. He neither shot, nor hunted nor fished, nor read, and yet he was never in the way in any house. He did play billiards, and whist, and croquet—very badly. He was a good judge of wine, and would occasionally condescend to look after the bottling of it on behalf of some very intimate friend. He was a great friend of Mrs. Thorne's, with whom he always spent ten days in the autumn at Chaldicotes.

Bernard and Emily were not insatiable lovers, but, nevertheless, Mrs. Thorne had thought it proper to provide a fourth in the riding-parties, and had put Mr. Dunn upon this duty. "Don't bother yourself about it, Siph," she had said; "only if those lovers should go off philandering out of sight, our little country lassie might find herself to be nowhere in the Park." Siph had promised to make himself useful, and had done so. There had generally been so large a number in their party that the work imposed on Mr. Dunn had been very light. Lily had never found out that he had been especially consigned to her as her own cavalier, but had seen quite enough of him to be aware that he was a pleasant companion. To her, thinking, as she ever was thinking, about Johnny Eames, Siph was much more agreeable than might have been a younger man who would have endeavoured to make her think about himself.

Thus when she found herself riding alone in Rotten Row with Siph Dunn, she was neither disconcerted nor displeased. He had been talking to her about Lord De Guest, whom he had known,—for Siph knew everybody,—and Lily had begun to wonder whether he knew John Eames. She would have liked to hear the opinion of such a man about John Eames. She was making up her mind that she would say something about the Crawley matter,—not in-



tending of course to mention John Eames's name,—when suddenly her tongue was paralyzed and she could not speak. At that moment they were standing near a corner, where a turning path made an angle in the iron rails, Mr. Dunn having proposed that they should wait there for a few minutes before they returned home, as it was probable that Bernard and Miss Dunstable might come up. They had been there for some five or ten minutes, and Lily had asked her first question about the Crawleys,—inquiring of Mr. Dunn whether he had heard of a terrible accusation which had been made against a clergyman in Barsetshire,—when on a sudden her tongue was paralyzed. As they were standing, Lily's horse was turned towards the diverging path, whereas Mr. Dunn was looking the other way, towards Achilles and Apsley house. Mr. Dunn was nearer to the railings, but though they were thus looking different ways they were so placed that each could see the face of the other. Then, on a sudden, coming slowly towards her along the diverging path and leaning on the arm of another man, she saw,—Adolphus Crosbie.

She had never seen him since a day on which she had parted from him with many kisses,—with warm, pressing, eager kisses,—of which she had been nowhat ashamed. He had then been to her almost as her husband. She had trusted him entirely, and had thrown herself into his arms with a full reliance. There is often much of reticence on the part of a woman towards a man to whom she is engaged, something also of shamefacedness occasionally. There exists a shadow of doubt, at least of that hesitation which shows that in spite of vows the woman knows that a change may come, and that provision for such possible steps backward should always be within her reach. But Lily had cast all such caution to the winds. She had given herself to the man entirely, and had determined that she would sink or swim, stand or fall, live or die, by him and by his truth. He had been as false as hell. She had been in his arms, clinging to him, kissing him, swearing that her only pleasure

in the world was to be with him,—with him her treasure, her promised husband; and within a month, a week, he had been false to her. There had come upon her crushing tidings, and she had for days wondered at herself that they had not killed her. But she had lived, and had forgiven him. She had still loved him, and had received new offers from him, which had been answered as the reader knows. But she had never seen him since the day on which she had parted from him at Allington, without a doubt as to his faith. Now he was before her, walking on the footpath, almost within reach of her whip.

He did not recognize her, but as he passed on he did recognize Mr. Onesiphorus Dunn, and stopped to speak to him. Or it might have been that Crosbie's friend Fowler Pratt stopped with this special object,—for Siph Dunn was an intimate friend of Fowler Pratt's. Crosbie and Siph were also acquainted, but in those days Crosbie did not care much for stopping his friends in the Park or elsewhere. He had become moody and discontented, and was generally seen going about the world alone. On this special occasion he was having a little special conversation about money with his very old friend Fowler Pratt.

"What, Siph, is this you? You're always on horseback now," said Fowler Pratt.

"Well, yes; I have gone in a good deal for cavalry work this last month. I've been lucky enough to have a young lady to ride with me." This he said in a whisper, which the distance of Lily justified. "How d'y'e do, Crosbie? One doesn't often see you on horseback, or on foot either."

"I've something to do besides going to look or to be looked at," said Crosbie. Then he raised his eyes and saw Lily's side-face, and recognized her. Had he seen her before he had been stopped on his way I think he would have passed on, endeavouring to escape observation. But as it was, his feet had been arrested before he knew of her close vicinity, and now it would seem that he was afraid of her, and was flying from her, were he at once to walk off, leav-

ing his friend behind him. And he knew that she had seen him, and had recognized him, and was now suffering from his presence. He could not but perceive that it was so from the fixedness of her face, and from the constrained manner in which she gazed before her. His friend Fowler Pratt had never seen Miss Dale, though he knew very much of her history. Siph Dunn knew nothing of the history of Crosbie and his love, and was unaware that he and Lily had ever seen each other. There was thus no help near her to extricate her from her difficulty.

“When a man has any work to do in the world,” said Siph, “he always boasts of it to his acquaintance, and curses his luck to himself. I have nothing to do and can go about to see and to be seen;—and I must own that I like it.”

“Especially the being seen,—eh, Siph?” said Fowler Pratt. “I also have nothing on earth to do, and I come here every day because it is as easy to do that as to go anywhere else.”

Crosbie was still looking at Lily. He could not help himself. He could not take his eyes from off her. He could see that she was as pretty as ever, that she was but very little altered. She was, in truth, somewhat stouter than in the old days, but of that he took no special notice. Should he speak to her? Should he try to catch her eye, and then raise his hat? Should he go up to her horse’s head boldly, and ask her to let bygones be bygones? He had an idea that of all courses which he could pursue that was the one which she would approve the best,— which would be most efficacious for him, if with her anything from him might have any efficacy. But he could not do it. He did not know what words he might best use. Would it become him humbly to sue to her for pardon? Or should he strive to express his unaltered love by some tone of his voice? Or should he simply ask her after her health? He made one step towards her, and he saw that the face became more rigid and more fixed than before, and then he desisted. He told himself that he was simply hateful to her. He thought that he could perceive

that there was no tenderness mixed with her unabated anger.

At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily came close upon him, and Bernard saw him at once. It was through Bernard that Lily and Crosbie had come to know each other. He and Bernard Dale had been fast friends in old times, and had, of course, been bitter enemies since the day of Crosbie's treachery. They had never spoken since, though they had often seen each other, and Dale was not at all disposed to speak to him now. The moment that he recognized Crosbie he looked across to his cousin. For an instant, an idea had flashed across him that he was there by her permission,—with her assent; but it required no second glance to show him that this was not the case. "Dunn," he said, "I think we will ride on," and he put his horse into a trot. Siph, whose ear was very accurate, and who knew at once that something was wrong, trotted on with him, and Lily, of course, was not left behind. "Is there anything the matter?" said Emily to her lover.

"Nothing specially the matter," he replied; "but you were standing in company with the greatest blackguard that ever lived, and I thought we had better change our ground."

"Bernard!" said Lily, flashing on him with all the fire which her eyes could command. Then she remembered that she could not reprimand him for the offence of such abuse in such a company; so she reined in her horse and fell a-weeping.

Siph Dunn, with his wicked cleverness, knew the whole story at once, remembering that he had once heard something of Crosbie having behaved very ill to some one before he married Lady Alexandrina De Courcy. He stopped his horse also, falling a little behind Lily, so that he might not be supposed to have seen her tears, and began to hum a tune. Emily also, though not wickedly clever, understood something of it. "If Bernard says anything to make you angry, I will scold him," she said. Then the two girls rode

on together in front, while Bernard fell back with Siph Dunn.

"Pratt," said Crosbie, putting his hand on his friend's shoulder as soon as the party had ridden out of hearing, "do you see that girl there in the dark blue habit?"

"What, the one nearest to the path?"

"Yes; the one nearest to the path. That is Lily Dale."

"Lily Dale!" said Fowler Pratt.

"Yes; that is Lily Dale."

"Did you speak to her?" Pratt asked.

"No; she gave me no chance. She was there but a moment. But it was herself. It seems so odd to me that I should have been thus so near her again." If there was any man to whom Crosbie could have spoken freely about Lily Dale it was this man, Fowler Pratt. Pratt was the oldest friend he had in the world, and it had happened that when he first woke to the misery that he had prepared for himself in throwing over Lily and betrothing himself to his late wife, Pratt had been the first person to whom he had communicated his sorrow. Not that he had ever been really open in his communications. It is not given to such men as Crosbie to speak openly of themselves to their friends. Nor, indeed, was Fowler Pratt one who was fond of listening to such tales. He had no such tales to tell of himself, and he thought that men and women should go through the world quietly, not subjecting themselves or their acquaintances to anxieties and emotions from peculiar conduct. But he was conscientious, and courageous also as well as prudent, and he had dared to tell Crosbie that he was behaving very badly. He had spoken his mind plainly, and had then given all the assistance in his power.

He paused a moment before he replied, weighing, like a prudent man, the force of the words he was about to utter. "It is much better as it is," he said. "It is much better that you should be as strangers for the future."

"I do not see that at all," said Crosbie. They were both leaning on the rails, and so they remained for the next twenty minutes. "I do not see that at all."

"I feel sure of it. What could come of any renewed intercourse,—even if she would allow it?"

"I might make her my wife."

"And do you think that you would be happy with her, or she with you, after what has passed?"

"I do think so."

"I do not. It might be possible that she should bring herself to marry you. Women delight to forgive injuries. They like the excitement of generosity. But she could never forget that you had had a former wife, or the circumstances under which you were married. And as for yourself, you would regret it after the first month. How could you ever speak to her of your love without speaking also of your shame? If a man does marry he should at least be able to hold up his head before his wife."

This was very severe, but Crosbie showed no anger. "I think I should do so," he said,—"after a while."

"And then, about money? Of course you would have to tell her everything."

"Everything—of course."

"It is like enough that she might not regard that,—except that she would feel that if you could not afford to marry her when you were unembarrassed, you can hardly afford to do so when you are over head and ears in debt."

"She has money now."

"After all that has come and gone you would hardly seek Lily Dale because you want to marry a fortune."

"You are too hard on me, Pratt. You know that my only reason for seeking her is that I love her."

"I do not mean to be hard. But I have a very strong opinion that the quarrels of lovers, when they are of so very serious a nature, are a bad basis for the renewal of love. Come, let us go and dress for dinner. I am going to dine with Mrs. Thorne, the millionaire, who married a country doctor, and who used to be called Miss Dunstable."

"I never dine out anywhere now," said Crosbie. And then they walked out of the Park together. Neither of

them, of course, knew that Lily Dale was staying at the house at which Fowler Pratt was going to dine.

Lily, as she rode home, did not speak a word. She would have given worlds to be able to talk, but she could not even make a beginning. She heard Bernard and Siph Dunn chatting behind her, and hoped that they would continue to do so till she was safe within the house. They all used her well, for no one tried to draw her into conversation. Once Emily said to her, "Shall we trot a little, Lily?" And then they had moved on quickly, and the misery was soon over. As soon as she was upstairs in the house, she got Emily by herself, and explained all the mystery in a word or two. "I fear I have made a fool of myself. That was the man to whom I was once engaged." "What, Mr. Crosbie?" said Emily, who had heard the whole story from Bernard. "Yes, Mr. Crosbie; pray, do not say a word of it to anybody, —not even to your aunt. I am better now, but I was such a fool. No, dear; I won't go into the drawing-room. I'll go upstairs, and come down ready for dinner."

When she was alone she sat down in her habit, and declared to herself that she certainly would never become the wife of Mr. Crosbie. I do not know why she should make such a declaration. She had promised her mother and John Eames that she would not do so, and that promise would certainly have bound her without any further resolutions on her own part. But, to tell the truth, the vision of the man had disenchanted her. When last she had seen him he had been as it were a god to her; and though, since that day, his conduct to her had been as ungodlike as it well might be, still the memory of the outward signs of his divinity had remained with her. It is difficult to explain how it had come to pass that the glimpse which she had had of him should have altered so much within her mind; — why she should so suddenly have come to regard him in an altered light. It was not simply that he looked to be older, and because his face was care-worn. It was not only that he had lost that look of an Apollo which Lily had once

in her mirth attributed to him. I think it was chiefly that she herself was older, and could no longer see a god in such a man. She had never regarded John Eames as being gifted with divinity, and had therefore always been making comparisons to his discredit. Any such comparison now would tend quite the other way. Nevertheless she would adhere to the two letters in her book. Since she had seen Mr. Crosbie she was altogether out of love with the prospect of matrimony.

She was in the room when Mr. Pratt was announced, and she at once recognized him as the man who had been with Crosbie. And when, some minutes afterwards, Siph Dunn came into the room, she could see that in their greeting allusion was made to the scene in the Park. But still it was probable that this man would not recognize her, and, if he did so, what would it matter? There were twenty people to sit down to dinner, and the chances were that she would not be called upon to exchange a word with Mr. Pratt. She had now recovered herself, and could speak freely to her friend Siph, and when Siph came and stood near her she thanked him graciously for his escort in the Park. "If it wasn't for you, Mr. Dunn, I really think I should not get any riding at all. Bernard and Miss Dunstable have only one thing to think about, and certainly I am not that one thing." She thought it probable that if she could keep Siph close to her, Mrs. Thorne, who always managed those things herself, might apportion her out to be led to dinner by her good-natured friend. But the fates were averse. The time had now come, and Lily was waiting her turn. "Mr. Fowler Pratt, let me introduce you to Miss Lily Dale," said Mrs. Thorne. Lily could perceive that Mr. Pratt was startled. The sign he gave was the least possible sign in the world; but still it sufficed for Lily to perceive it. She put her hand upon his arm, and walked down with him to the dining-room without giving him the slightest cause to suppose that she knew who he was.

"I think I saw you in the Park riding?" he said.

"Yes, I was there; we go nearly every day."

"I never ride; I was walking."

"It seems to me that the people don't go there to walk, but to stand still," said Lily. "I cannot understand how so many people can bear to loiter about in that way—leaning on the rails and doing nothing."

"It is about as good as the riding, and costs less money. That is all that can be said for it. Do you live chiefly in town?"

"O dear, no; I live altogether in the country. I'm only up here because a cousin is going to be married."

"Captain Dale you mean—to Miss Dunstable?" said Fowler Pratt.

"When they have been joined together in holy matrimony, I shall go down to the country, and never, I suppose, come up to London again."

"You do not like London?"

"Not as a residence, I think," said Lily. "But of course one's likings and dislikings on such a matter depend on circumstances. I live with my mother, and all my relatives live near us. Of course I like the country best, because they are there."

"Young ladies so often have a different way of looking at this subject. I shouldn't wonder if Miss Dunstable's views about it were altogether of another sort. Young ladies generally expect to be taken away from their fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts."

"But you see I expect to be left with mine," said Lily. After that she turned as much away from Mr. Fowler Pratt as she could, having taken an aversion to him. What business had he to talk to her about being taken away from her uncles and aunts? She had seen him with Mr. Crosbie, and it might be possible that they were intimate friends. It might be that Mr. Pratt was asking questions in Mr. Crosbie's interest. Let that be as it might, she would answer no more questions from him further than ordinary good breeding should require of her.

"She is a nice girl, certainly," said Fowler Pratt to himself, as he walked home, "and I have no doubt would make a good, ordinary, every-day wife. But she is not such a paragon that a man should condescend to grovel in the dirt for her."

That night Lily told Emily Dunstable the whole of Mr. Crosbie's history as far as she knew it, and also explained her new aversion to Mr. Fowler Pratt. "They are very great friends," said Emily. "Bernard has told me so; and you may be sure that Mr. Pratt knew the whole history before he came here. I am so sorry that my aunt asked him."

"It does not signify in the least," said Lily. "Even if I were to meet Mr. Crosbie I don't think I should make such a fool of myself again. As it is, I can only hope he did not see it."

"I am sure he did not."

Then there was a pause, during which Lily sat with her face resting on both her hands. "It is wonderful how much he is altered," she said at last.

"Think how much he has suffered."

"I suppose I am altered as much, only I do not see it in myself."

"I don't know what you were, but I don't think you can have changed much. You no doubt have suffered too, but not as he has done."

"Oh, as for that, I have done very well. I think I'll go to bed now. The riding makes me so sleepy."

CHAPTER LIV

The Clerical Commission

IT was at last arranged that the five clergymen selected should meet at Dr. Tempest's house in Silverbridge to make inquiry and report to the bishop whether the circumstances connected with the cheque for twenty pounds were of such a nature as to make it incumbent on him to institute proceedings against Mr. Crawley in the Court of Arches. Dr. Tempest had acted upon the letter which he had received from the bishop, exactly as though there had been no meeting at the palace, no quarrel to the death between him and Mrs. Proudie. He was a prudent man, gifted with the great power of holding his tongue, and had not spoken a word, even to his wife, of what had occurred. After such a victory our old friend the archdeacon would have blown his own trumpet loudly among his friends. Plumstead would have heard of it instantly, and the pæan would have been sung out in the neighbouring parishes of Eiderdown, Stogpingum, and St. Ewolds. The high-street of Barchester would have known of it, and the very bedesmen in Hiram's Hospital would have told among themselves the terrible discomfiture of the bishop and his lady. But Dr. Tempest spoke no word of it to anybody. He wrote letters to the two clergymen named by the bishop, and himself selected two others out of his own rural deanery, and suggested to them all a day at which a preliminary meeting should be held at his own house. The two who were invited by him were Mr. Oriel, the rector of Greshamsbury, and Mr. Robarts, the vicar of Framley. They all assented to the proposition, and on the day named assembled themselves at Silverbridge.

It was now April, and the judges were to come into Barchester before the end of the month. What then could be the use of this ecclesiastical inquiry exactly at the same time? Men and women declared that it was a double prose-

cution, and that a double prosecution for the same offence was a course of action opposed to the feelings and traditions of the country. Miss Anne Prettyman went so far as to say that it was unconstitutional, and Mary Walker declared that no human being except Mrs. Proudie would ever have been guilty of such cruelty. "Don't tell me about the bishop, John," she said; "the bishop is a cypher." "You may be sure Dr. Tempest would not have a hand in it if it were not right," said John Walker. "My dear Mr. John," said Miss Anne Prettyman, "Dr. Tempest is as hard as a bar of iron, and always was. But I am surprised that Mr. Robarts should take a part in it."

In the meantime, at the palace, Mrs. Proudie had been reduced to learn what was going on from Mr. Thumble. The bishop had never spoken a word to her respecting Mr. Crawley since that terrible day on which Dr. Tempest had witnessed his imbecility,—having absolutely declined to answer when his wife had mentioned the subject. "You won't speak to me about it, my dear?" she had said to him, when he had thus declined, remonstrating more in sorrow than in anger. "No; I won't," the bishop had replied: "there has been a great deal too much talking about it. It has broken my heart already, I know." These were very bad days in the palace. Mrs. Proudie affected to be satisfied with what was being done. She talked to Mr. Thumble about Mr. Crawley and the cheque, as though everything were arranged quite to her satisfaction,—as though everything, indeed, had been arranged by herself. But everybody about the house could see that the manner of the woman was altogether altered. She was milder than usual with the servants and was almost too gentle in her usage of her husband. It seemed as though something had happened to frighten her and break her spirit, and it was whispered about through the palace that she was afraid that the bishop was dying. As for him, he hardly left his own sitting-room in these days, except when he joined the family at breakfast and at dinner. And in his study he did little or nothing. He would smile

when his chaplain went to him, and give some trifling verbal directions; but for days he scarcely ever took a pen in his hands, and though he took up many books he read hardly a page. How often he told his wife in those days that he was broken-hearted, no one but his wife ever knew.

“What has happened that you should speak like that?” she said to him once. “What has broken your heart?”

“You,” he replied. “You; you have done it.”

“Oh, Tom,” she said, going back into the memory of very far distant days in her nomenclature, “how can you speak to me so cruelly as that! That it should come to that between you and me, after all!”

“Why did you not go away and leave me that day when I told you?”

“Did you ever know a woman who liked to be turned out of a room in her own house?” said Mrs. Proudie. When Mrs. Proudie had condescended so far as this, it must be admitted that in those days there was great trouble in the palace.

Mr. Thumble, on the day before he went to Silverbridge, asked for an audience with the bishop in order that he might receive instructions. He had been strictly desired to do this by Mrs. Proudie, and had not dared to disobey her injunctions,—thinking, however, himself, that his doing so was inexpedient. “I have got nothing to say to you about it; not a word,” said the bishop crossly. “I thought that perhaps you might like to see me before I started,” pleaded Mr. Thumble very humbly. “I don’t want to see you at all,” said the bishop; “you are going there to exercise your own judgment,—if you have got any; and you ought not to come to me.” After that Mr. Thumble began to think that Mrs. Proudie was right, and that the bishop was near his dissolution.

Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful went over to Silverbridge together in a gig, hired from the Dragon of Wantly

—as to the cost of which there arose among them a not unnatural apprehension which amounted at last almost to dismay. “I don’t mind it so much for once,” said Mr. Quiverful, “but if many such meetings are necessary, I for one can’t afford it, and I won’t do it. A man with my family can’t allow himself to be money out of pocket in that way.” “It is hard,” said Mr. Thumble. “She ought to pay it herself, out of her own pocket,” said Mr. Quiverful. He had had concerns with the palace when Mrs. Proudie was in the full swing of her dominion, and had not as yet begun to suspect that there might possibly be a change.

Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts were already sitting with Dr. Tempest when the other two clergymen were shown into the room. When the first greetings were over luncheon was announced, and while they were eating not a word was said about Mr. Crawley. The ladies of the family were not present, and the five clergymen sat round the table alone. It would have been difficult to have got together five gentlemen less likely to act with one mind and one spirit;—and perhaps it was all the better for Mr. Crawley that it should be so. Dr. Tempest himself was a man peculiarly capable of exercising the functions of a judge in such a matter, had he sat alone as a judge; but he was one who would be almost sure to differ from others who sat as equal assessors with him. Mr. Oriel was a gentleman at all points; but he was very shy, very reticent, and altogether uninstructed in the ordinary daily intercourse of man with man. Any one knowing him might have predicted of him that he would be sure on such an occasion as this to be found floundering in a sea of doubts. Mr. Quiverful was the father of a large family, whose whole life had been devoted to fighting a cruel world on behalf of his wife and children. That fight he had fought bravely; but it had left him no energy for any other business. Mr. Thumble was a poor creature,—so poor a creature that, in spite of a small restless ambition to be doing something, he was almost cowed by the hard lines of Dr. Tempest’s brow. The Rev. Mark Robarts was a man of the

world, and a clever fellow, and did not stand in awe of anybody,—unless it might be, in a very moderate degree, of his patrons the Luftons, whom he was bound to respect; but his cleverness was not the cleverness needed by a judge. He was essentially a partisan, and would be sure to vote against the bishop in such a matter as this now before him. There was a palace faction in the diocese, and an anti-palace faction. Mr. Thumble and Mr. Quiverful belonged to one, and Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts to the other. Mr. Thumble was too weak to stick to his faction against the strength of such a man as Dr. Tempest. Mr. Quiverful would be too indifferent to do so,—unless his interest were concerned. Mr. Oriel would be too conscientious to regard his own side on such an occasion as this. But Mark Robarts would be sure to support his friends and oppose his enemies, let the case be what it might. "Now, gentlemen, if you please, we will go into the other room," said Dr. Tempest. They went into the other room, and there they found five chairs arranged for them round the table. Not a word had as yet been said about Mr. Crawley, and no one of the four strangers knew whether Mr. Crawley was to appear before them on that day or not.

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Tempest, seating himself at once in an arm-chair placed at the middle of the table, "I think it will be well to explain to you at first what, as I regard the matter, is the extent of the work which we are called upon to perform. It is of its nature very disagreeable. It cannot but be so, let it be ever so limited. Here is a brother clergyman and a gentleman, living among us, and doing his duty, as we are told, in a most exemplary manner; and suddenly we hear that he is accused of a theft. The matter is brought before the magistrates, of whom I myself was one, and he was committed for trial. There is therefore *prima facie* evidence of his guilt. But I do not think that we need go into the question of his guilt at all." When he said this, the other four all looked up at him in astonishment. "I thought that we had been summoned here for that purpose," said Mr.

Robarts. "Not at all, as I take it," said the doctor. "Were we to commence any such inquiry, the jury would have given their verdict before we could come to any conclusion; and it would be impossible for us to oppose that verdict, whether it declares this unfortunate gentleman to be innocent or to be guilty. If the jury shall say that he is innocent, there is an end of the matter altogether. He would go back to his parish amidst the sympathy and congratulations of his friends. That is what we should all wish."

"Of course it is," said Mr. Robarts. They all declared that was their desire, as a matter of course; and Mr. Thumble said it louder than any one else.

"But if he be found guilty, then will come that difficulty to the bishop, in which we are bound to give him any assistance within our power."

"Of course we are," said Mr. Thumble, who, having heard his own voice once, and having liked the sound, thought that he might creep into a little importance by using it on any occasion that opened itself for him.

"If you will allow me, sir, I will venture to state my views as shortly as I can," said Dr. Tempest. "That may perhaps be the most expeditious course for us all in the end."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Thumble. "I didn't mean to interrupt."

"In the case of his being found guilty," continued the doctor, "there will arise the question whether the punishment awarded to him by the judge should suffice for ecclesiastical purposes. Suppose, for instance, that he should be imprisoned for two months, should he be allowed to return to his living at the expiration of that term?"

"I think he ought," said Mr. Robarts;—"considering all things."

"I don't see why he shouldn't," said Mr. Quiverful.

Mr. Oriel sat listening patiently, and Mr. Thumble looked up to the doctor, expecting to hear some opinion expressed by him with which he might coincide.

"There certainly are reasons why he should not," said

Dr. Tempest; "though I by no means say that those reasons are conclusive in the present case. In the first place, a man who has stolen money can hardly be a fitting person to teach others not to steal."

"You must look to the circumstances," said Robarts.

"Yes, that is true; but just bear with me a moment. It cannot, at any rate, be thought that a clergyman should come out of prison and go to his living without any notice from his bishop, simply because he has already been punished under the common law. If this were so, a clergyman might be fined ten days running for being drunk in the street,—five shillings each time,—and at the end of that time might set his bishop at defiance. When a clergyman has shown himself to be utterly unfit for clerical duties, he must not be held to be protected from ecclesiastical censure or from deprivation by the action of the common law."

"But Mr. Crawley has not shown himself to be unfit," said Robarts.

"That is begging the question, Robarts," said the doctor.

"Just so," said Mr. Thumble. Then Mr. Robarts gave a look at Mr. Thumble, and Mr. Thumble retired into his shoes.

"That is the question as to which we are called upon to advise the bishop," continued Dr. Tempest. "And I must say that I think the bishop is right. If he were to allow the matter to pass by without notice,—that is to say, in the event of Mr. Crawley being pronounced to be guilty by a jury,—he would, I think, neglect his duty. Now, I have been informed that the bishop has recommended Mr. Crawley to desist from his duties till the trial be over, and that Mr. Crawley has declined to take the bishop's advice."

"That is true," said Mr. Thumble. "He altogether disregarded the bishop."

"I cannot say that I think he was wrong," said Dr. Tempest.

"I think he was quite right," said Mr. Robarts.

"A bishop in almost all cases is entitled to the obedience of his clergy," said Mr. Oriel.

"I must say that I agree with you, sir," said Mr. Thumble.

"The income is not large, and I suppose that it would have gone with the duties," said Mr. Quiverful. "It is very hard for a man with a family to live when his income has been stopped."

"Be that as it may," continued the doctor, "the bishop feels that it may be his duty to oppose the return of Mr. Crawley to his pulpit, and that he can oppose it in no other way than by proceeding against Mr. Crawley under the Clerical Offences Act. I propose, therefore, that we should invite Mr. Crawley to attend here——"

"Mr. Crawley is not coming here to-day, then?" said Mr. Robarts.

"I thought it useless to ask for his attendance until we had settled on our course of action," said Dr. Tempest. "If we are all agreed, I will beg him to come here on this day week, when we will meet again. And we will then ask him whether he will submit himself to the bishop's decision, in the event of the jury finding him guilty. If he should decline to do so, we can only then form our opinion as to what will be the bishop's duty by reference to the facts as they are elicited at the trial. If Mr. Crawley should choose to make to us any statement as to his own case, of course we shall be willing to receive it. That is my idea of what had better be done; and now, if any gentleman has any other proposition to make, of course we shall be pleased to hear him." Dr. Tempest, as he said this, looked round upon his companions, as though his pleasure, under the circumstances suggested by himself, would be very doubtful.

"I don't suppose we can do anything better," said Mr. Robarts. "I think it a pity, however, that any steps should have been taken by the bishop before the trial."

"The bishop has been placed in a very delicate position," said Mr. Thumble, pleading for his patron.

"I don't know the meaning of the word 'delicate,'" said

Robarts. "I think his duty was very clear, to avoid interference whilst the matter is, so to say, before the judge."

"Nobody has anything else to propose?" said Dr. Tempest. "Then I will write to Mr. Crawley, and you, gentlemen, will perhaps do me the honour of meeting me here at one o'clock on this day week." Then the meeting was over, and the four clergymen having shaken hands with Dr. Tempest in the hall, all promised that they would return on that day week. So far, Dr. Tempest had carried his point exactly as he might have done had the four gentlemen been represented by the chairs on which they had sat.

"I shan't come again, all the same, unless I know where I'm to get my expenses," said Mr. Quiverful, as he got into the gig.

"I shall come," said Mr. Thumble, "because I think it a duty. Of course it is a hardship." Mr. Thumble liked the idea of being joined with such men as Dr. Tempest, and Mr. Oriel, and Mr. Robarts, and would any day have paid the expense of a gig from Barchester to Silverbridge out of his own pocket, for the sake of sitting with such bench-fellows on any clerical inquiry.

"One's first duty is to one's own wife and family," said Mr. Quiverful.

"Well, yes; in a way, of course, that is quite true, Mr. Quiverful; and when we know how very inadequate are the incomes of the working clergy, we cannot but feel ourselves to be, if I may so say, put upon, when we have to defray the expenses incidental to special duties out of our own pockets. I think, you know,—I don't mind saying this to you,—that the palace should have provided us with a chaise and pair." This was ungrateful on the part of Mr. Thumble, who had been permitted to ride miles upon miles to various outlying clerical duties upon the bishop's worn-out cob. "You see," continued Mr. Thumble, "you and I go specially to represent the palace, and the palace ought to remember that. I think there ought to have been a chaise and pair; I do indeed."

"I don't care much what the conveyance is," said Mr. Quiverful; "but I certainly shall pay nothing more out of my own pocket;—certainly I shall not."

"The result will be that the palace will be thrown over if they don't take care," said Mr. Thumble. "Tempest, however, seems to be pretty steady. Tempest, I think, is steady. You see he is getting tired of parish work, and would like to go into the close. That's what he is looking out for. Did you ever see such a fellow as that Robarts,—just look at him;—quite indecent, wasn't he? He thinks he can have his own way in everything, just because his sister married a lord. I do hate to see all that meanness."

Mark Robarts and Caleb Oriel left Silverbridge in another gig by the same road, and soon passed their brethren, as Mr. Robarts was in the habit of driving a large, quick-stepping horse. The last remarks were being made as the dust from the vicar of Framley's wheels saluted the faces of the two slower clergymen. Mr. Oriel had promised to dine and sleep at Framley, and therefore returned in Mr. Robarts' gig.

"Quite unnecessary, all this fuss; don't you think so?" said Mr. Robarts.

"I am not quite sure," said Mr. Oriel. "I can understand that the bishop may have found a difficulty."

"The bishop, indeed! The bishop doesn't care two straws about it. It's Mrs. Proudie! She has put her finger on the poor man's neck because he has not put his neck beneath her feet; and now she thinks she can crush him,—as she would crush you or me, if it were in her power. That's about the long and the short of the bishop's solicitude."

"You are very hard on him," said Mr. Oriel.

"I know him;—and am not at all hard on him. She is hard upon him if you like. Tempest is fair. He is very fair, and as long as no one meddles with him, he won't do amiss. I can't hold my tongue always, but I often know that it is better that I should."

Dr. Tempest said not a word to any one on the subject,

not even in his own defence. And yet he was sorely tempted. On the very day of the meeting he dined at Mr. Walker's in Silverbridge, and there submitted to be talked at by all the ladies and most of the gentlemen present, without saying a word in his own defence. And yet a word or two would have been so easy and so conclusive.

"Oh, Dr. Tempest," said Mary Walker, "I am so sorry that you have joined the bishop."

"Are you, my dear?" said he. "It is generally thought well that a parish clergyman should agree with his bishop."

"But you know, Dr. Tempest, that you don't agree with your bishop generally."

"Then it is the more fortunate that I shall be able to agree with him on this occasion."

Major Grantly was present at the dinner, and ventured to ask the doctor in the course of the evening what he thought would be done. "I should not venture to ask such a question, Dr. Tempest," he said, "unless I had the strongest possible reason to justify my anxiety."

"I don't know that I can tell you anything, Major Grantly," said the doctor. "We did not even see Mr. Crawley today. But the real truth is that he must stand or fall as the jury shall find him guilty or not guilty. It would be the same in any profession. Could a captain in the army hold up his head in his regiment after he had been tried and found guilty of stealing twenty pounds?"

"I don't think he could," said the major.

"Neither can a clergyman," said the doctor. "The bishop can neither make him nor mar him. It is the jury that must do it."

CHAPTER LV

Framley Parsonage

AT this time Grace Crawley was at Framley Parsonage. Old Lady Lufton's strategy had been quite intelligible, but some people said that in point of etiquette and judgment and moral conduct, it was indefensible. Her vicar, Mr. Robarts, had been selected to be one of the clergymen who was to sit in ecclesiastical judgment upon Mr. Crawley, and while he was so sitting Mr. Crawley's daughter was staying in Mr. Robarts' house as a visitor with his wife! It might be that there was no harm in this. Lady Lufton, when the apparent impropriety was pointed out to her by no less a person than Archdeacon Grantly, ridiculed the idea. "My dear archdeacon," Lady Lufton had said, "we all know the bishop to be such a fool and the bishop's wife to be such a knave, that we cannot allow ourselves to be governed in this matter by ordinary rules. Do you not think that it is expedient to show how utterly we disregard his judgment and her malice?" The archdeacon had hesitated much before he spoke to Lady Lufton, whether he should address himself to her or to Mr. Robarts,—or indeed to Mrs. Robarts. But he had become aware that the proposition as to the visit had originated with Lady Lufton, and he had therefore decided on speaking to her. He had not condescended to say a word as to his son, nor would he so condescend. Nor could he go from Lady Lufton to Mr. Robarts, having once failed with her ladyship. Indeed, in giving him his due, we must acknowledge that his disapprobation of Lady Lufton's strategy arose rather from his true conviction as to its impropriety, than from any fear lest this attention paid to Miss Crawley should tend to bring about her marriage with his son. By this time he hated the very name of Crawley. He hated it the more because in hating it he had to put himself for the time on the same side with Mrs. Proudie. But for all that he would not condescend to

any unworthy mode of fighting. He thought it wrong that the young lady should be invited to Framley Parsonage at this moment, and he said so to the person who had, as he thought, in truth, given the invitation; but he would not allow his own personal motives to induce him to carry on the argument with Lady Lufton. "The bishop is a fool," he said, "and the bishop's wife is a knave. Nevertheless I would not have had the young lady over to Framley at this moment. If, however, you think it right and Robarts thinks it right, there is an end of it."

"Upon my word we do," said Lady Lufton.

I am induced to think that Mr. Robarts was not quite confident of the expediency of what he was doing by the way in which he mentioned to Mr. Oriel the fact of Miss Crawley's presence at the parsonage as he drove that gentleman home in his gig. They had been talking about Mr. Crawley when he suddenly turned himself round, so that he could look at his companion, and said, "Miss Crawley is staying with us at the parsonage at the present moment."

"What! Mr. Crawley's daughter?" said Mr. Oriel; showing plainly by his voice that the tidings had much surprised him.

"Yes; Mr. Crawley's daughter."

"Oh, indeed. I did not know that you were on those terms with the family."

"We have known them for the last seven or eight years," said Mark; "and though I should be giving you a false notion if I were to say that I myself have known them intimately,—for Crawley is a man whom it is quite impossible to know intimately,—yet the womankind at Framley have known them. My sister stayed with them over at Hogglestock for some time."

"What; Lady Lufton?"

"Yes; my sister Lucy. It was just before her marriage. There was a lot of trouble, and the Crawleys were all ill, and she went to nurse them. And then the old lady took them up, and altogether there came to be a sort of feeling that

they were to be regarded as friends. They are always in trouble, and now in this special trouble the women between them have thought it best to have the girl over at Framley. Of course I had a kind of feeling about this commission; but as I knew that it would make no difference with me I did not think it necessary to put my veto upon the visit." Mr. Oriel said nothing further, but Mark Robarts was aware that Mr. Oriel did not quite approve of the visit.

That morning old Lady Lufton herself had come across to the parsonage with the express view of bidding all the parsonage party to come across to the hall to dine. "You can tell Mr. Oriel, Fanny, with Lucy's compliments, how delighted she will be to see him." Old Lady Lufton always spoke of her daughter-in-law as the mistress of the house. "If you think he is particular, you know, we will send a note across." Mrs. Robarts said that she supposed Mr. Oriel would not be particular, but, looking at Grace, made some faint excuse. "You must come, my dear," said Lady Lufton. "Lucy wishes it particularly." Mrs. Robarts did not know how to say that she would not come; and so the matter stood,—when Mrs. Robarts was called upon to leave the room for a moment, and Lady Lufton and Grace were left alone.

"Dear Lady Lufton," said Grace, getting up suddenly from her chair; "will you do me a favour,—a great favour?" She spoke with an energy which quite surprised the old lady, and caused her almost to start from her seat.

"I don't like making promises," said Lady Lufton; "but anything I can do with propriety I will."

"You can do this. Pray let me stay here to-day. You don't understand how I feel about going out while papa is in this way. I know how kind and how good you all are; and when dear Mrs. Robarts asked me here, and mamma said that I had better come, I could not refuse. But indeed, indeed, I had rather not go out to a dinner-party."

"It is not a party, my dear girl," said Lady Lufton, with the kindest voice which she knew how to assume. "And

you must remember that my daughter-in-law regards you as so very old a friend! You remember, of course, when she was staying over at Hogglestock?"

"Indeed I do. I remember it well."

"And therefore you should not regard it as going out. There will be nobody there but ourselves and the people from this house."

"But it will be going out, Lady Lufton; and I do hope you will let me stay here. You cannot think how I feel it. Of course I cannot go without something like dressing, and—and—and— In poor papa's state I feel that I ought not to do anything that looks like gaiety. I ought never to forget it;—not for a moment."

There was a tear in Lady Lufton's eye as she said,—“My dear, you shan't come. You and Fanny shall stop and dine here by yourselves. The gentlemen shall come.”

“Do let Mrs. Robarts go, please,” said Grace.

“I won't do anything of the kind,” said Lady Lufton. Then, when Mrs. Robarts returned to the room, her ladyship explained it all in two words. “Whilst you have been away, my dear, Grace has begged off, and therefore we have decided that Mr. Oriel and Mr. Robarts shall come without you.”

“I am so sorry, Mrs. Robarts,” said Grace.

“Pooh, pooh,” said Lady Lufton. “Fanny and I have known each other quite long enough not to stand on any compliments,—haven't we, my dear? I must get home now, as all the morning has gone by. Fanny my dear, I want to speak to you.” Then she expressed her opinion of Grace Crawley as she walked across the parsonage garden with Mrs. Robarts. “She is a very nice girl, and a very good girl, I am sure; and she shows excellent feeling. Whatever happens we must take care of her. And, Fanny, have you observed how handsome she is?”

“We think her very pretty.”

“She is more than pretty when she has a little fire in her eyes. She is downright handsome,—or will be when she

fills out a little. I tell you what, my dear; she'll make havoc with somebody yet; you see if she doesn't. By—by. Tell the two gentlemen to be up by seven punctually." And then Lady Lufton went home.

Grace so contrived that Mr. Oriel came and went without seeing her. There was a separate nursery breakfast at the parsonage, and by special permission Grace was allowed to have her tea and bread-and-butter on the next morning with the children. "I thought you told me Miss Crawley was here," said Mr. Oriel, as the two clergymen stood waiting for the gig that was to take the visitor away to Barchester.

"So she is," said Robarts; "but she likes to hide herself, because of her father's trouble. You can't blame her."

"No, indeed," said Mr. Oriel.

"Poor girl. If you knew her you would not only pity her, but like her."

"Is she,—what you call——?"

"You mean, is she a lady?"

"Of course she is by birth, and all that," said Mr. Oriel, apologizing for his inquiry.

"I don't think there is another girl in the county so well educated," said Mr. Robarts.

"Indeed! I had no idea of that."

"And we think her a great beauty. As for manners, I never saw a girl with a prettier way of her own."

"Dear me," said Mr. Oriel. "I wish she had come down to breakfast."

It will have been perceived that old Lady Lufton had heard nothing of Major Grantly's offence; that she had no knowledge that Grace had already made havoc, as she had called it,—had, in truth, made very sad havoc, at Plumstead. She did not, therefore, think much about it when her son told her upon her return home from the parsonage on that afternoon that Major Grantly had come over from Cosby Lodge, and that he was going to dine and sleep at Framley Court. Some slight idea of thankfulness came across her mind that she had not betrayed Grace Crawley into a

meeting with a stranger. "I asked him to come some day before we went up to town," said his lordship; "and I am glad he has come to-day, as two clergymen to one's self are, at any rate, one too many." So Major Grantly dined and slept at the Court.

But Mrs. Robarts was in a great flurry when she was told of this by her husband on his return from the dinner. Mrs. Crawley had found an opportunity of telling the story of Major Grantly's love to Mrs. Robarts before she had sent her daughter to Framley, knowing that the families were intimate, and thinking it right that there should be some precaution.

"I wonder whether he will come up here," Mrs. Robarts had said.

"Probably not," said the vicar. "He said he was going home early."

"I hope he will not come—for Grace's sake," said Mrs. Robarts. She hesitated whether she should tell her husband. She always did tell him everything. But on this occasion she thought she had no right to do so, and she kept the secret. "Don't do anything to bring him up, dear."

"You needn't be afraid. He won't come," said the vicar. On the following morning, as soon as Mr. Oriel was gone, Mr. Robarts went out,—about his parish he would probably have called it; but in half an hour he might have been seen strolling about the Court stable-yard with Lord Lufton. "Where is Grantly?" asked the vicar. "I don't know where he is," said his lordship. "He has sloped off somewhere." The major had sloped off to the parsonage, well knowing in what nest his dove was lying hid; and he and the vicar had passed each other. The major had gone out at the front gate, and the vicar had gone in at the stable entrance.

The two clergymen had hardly taken their departure when Major Grantly knocked at the parsonage door. He had come so early that Mrs. Robarts had taken no precautions,—even had there been any precautions which she would have thought it right to take. Grace was in the act

of coming down the stairs, not having heard the knock at the door, and thus she found her lover in the hall. He had asked, of course, for Mrs. Robarts, and thus they two entered the drawing-room together. They had not had time to speak when the servant opened the drawing-room door to announce the visitor. There had been no word spoken between Mrs. Robarts and Grace about Major Grantly, but the mother had told the daughter of what she had said to Mrs. Robarts.

“Grace,” said the major, “I am so glad to find you!” Then he turned to Mrs. Robarts with his open hand. “You won’t take it uncivil of me if I say that my visit is not entirely to yourself? I think I may take upon myself to say that I and Miss Crawley are old friends. May I not?”

Grace could not answer a word. “Mrs. Crawley told me that you had known her at Silverbridge,” said Mrs. Robarts, driven to say something, but feeling that she was blundering.

“I came over to Framley yesterday because I heard that she was here. Am I wrong to come up here to see her?”

“I think she must answer that for herself, Major Grantly.”

“Am I wrong, Grace?” Grace thought that he was the finest gentleman and the noblest lover that had ever shown his devotion to a woman, and was stirred by a mighty resolve that if it ever should be in her power to reward him after any fashion, she would pour out the reward with a very full hand indeed. But what was she to say on the present moment? “Am I wrong, Grace?” he said, repeating his question with so much emphasis, that she was positively driven to answer it.

“I do not think you are wrong at all. How can I say you are wrong when you are so good? If I could be your servant I would serve you. But I can be nothing to you, because of papa’s disgrace. Dear Mrs. Robarts, I cannot stay. You must answer him for me.” And having thus made her speech she escaped from the room.

It may suffice to say further now that the major did not see Grace again during that visit at Framley.

CHAPTER LVI

The Archdeacon goes to Framley

BY some of those unseen telegraphic wires which carry news about the country and make no charge for the conveyance, Archdeacon Grantly heard that his son the major was at Framley. Now in that itself there would have been nothing singular. There had been for years much intimacy between the Lufton family and the Grantly family,—so much that an alliance between the two houses had once been planned, the elders having considered it expedient that the young lord should marry that Griselda who had since mounted higher in the world even than the elders had then projected for her. There had come no such alliance; but the intimacy had not ceased, and there was nothing in itself surprising in the fact that Major Grantly should be staying at Framley Court. But the archdeacon, when he heard the news, bethought him at once of Grace Crawley. Could it be possible that his old friend Lady Lufton,—Lady Lufton whom he had known and trusted all his life, whom he had ever regarded as a pillar of the church in Barsetshire,—should now be untrue to him in a matter so closely affecting his interests? Men when they are worried by fears and teased by adverse circumstances become suspicious of those on whom suspicion should never rest. It was hardly possible, the archdeacon thought, that Lady Lufton should treat him so unworthily,—but the circumstances were strong against his friend. Lady Lufton had induced Miss Crawley to go to Framley, much against his advice, at a time when such a visit seemed to him to be very improper; and it now appeared that his son was to be there at the same time,—a fact of which Lady Lufton had made no mention to him whatever. Why had not Lady Lufton told him that Henry Grantly was coming to Framley Court? The reader, whose interest in the matter will be less keen than was the archdeacon's, will know very well why Lady Lufton had said nothing about the major's visit. The reader will remember

that Lady Lufton, when she saw the archdeacon, was as ignorant as to the intended visit as was the archdeacon himself. But the archdeacon was uneasy, troubled, and suspicious;—and he suspected his old friend unworthily.

He spoke to his wife about it within a very few hours of the arrival of the tidings by those invisible wires. He had already told her that Miss Crawley was to go to Framley parsonage, and that he thought that Mrs. Robarts was wrong to receive her at such a time. “It is only intended for good-nature,” Mrs. Grantly had said. “It is misplaced good-nature at the present moment,” the archdeacon had replied. Mrs. Grantly had not thought it worth her while to undertake at the moment any strong defence of the Framley people. She knew well how odious was the name of Crawley in her husband’s ears, and she felt that the less that was said at present about the Crawleys the better for the peace of the rectory at Plumstead. She had therefore allowed the expression of his disapproval to pass unchallenged. But now he came upon her with a more bitter grievance, and she was obliged to argue the matter with him.

“What do you think?” said he; “Henry is at Framley.”

“He can hardly be staying there,” said Mrs. Grantly, “because I know that he is so very busy at home.” The business at home of which the major’s mother was speaking was his projected moving from Cosby Lodge, a subject which was also very odious to the archdeacon. He did not wish his son to move from Cosby Lodge. He could not endure the idea that his son should be known throughout the county to be giving up a residence because he could not afford to keep it. The archdeacon could have afforded to keep up two Cosby Lodges for his son, and would have been well pleased to do so, if only his son would not misbehave against him so shamefully! He could not bear that his son should be punished, openly, before the eyes of all Barsetshire. Indeed he did not wish that his son should be punished at all. He simply desired that his son should recognise his father’s power to inflict punishment. It would

be henbane to Archdeacon Grantly to have a poor son,—a son living at Pau,—among Frenchmen!—because he could not afford to live in England. Why had the archdeacon been careful of his money, adding house to house and field to field? He himself was contented,—so he told himself,—to die as he had lived in a country parsonage, working with the collar round his neck up to the day of his death, if God would allow him so to do. He was ambitious of no grandeur for himself. So he would tell himself,—being partly oblivious of certain episodes in his own life. All his wealth had been got together for his children. He desired that his sons should be fitting brothers for their august sister. And now the son who was nearest to him, whom he was bent upon making a squire in his own county, wanted to marry the daughter of a man who had stolen twenty pounds, and when objection was made to so discreditable a connexion, replied by packing up all his things and saying that he would go and live—at Pau! The archdeacon therefore did not like to hear of his son being very busy at home.

“I don’t know whether he’s busy or not,” said the archdeacon, “but I tell you he is staying at Framley.”

“From whom have you heard it?”

“What matter does that make if it is so? I heard it from Flurry.”

“Flurry may have been mistaken,” said Mrs. Grantly.

“It is not at all likely. Those people always know about such things. He heard it from the Framley keeper. I don’t doubt but it’s true, and I think that it’s a great shame.”

“A great shame that Henry should be at Framley! He has been there two or three times every year since he has lived in the county.”

“It is a great shame that he should be had over there just at the time when that girl is there also. It is impossible to believe that such a thing is an accident.”

“But, archdeacon, you do not mean to say that you think that Lady Lufton has arranged it?”

“I don’t know who has arranged it. Somebody has ar-

ranged it. If it is Robarts, that is almost worse. One could forgive a woman in such a matter better than one could a man."

"Psha!" Mrs. Grantly's temper was never bitter, but at this moment it was not sweetened by her husband's very uncivil reference to her sex. "The whole idea is nonsense, and you should get it out of your head."

"Am I to get it out of my head that Henry wants to make this girl his wife, and that the two are at this moment at Framley together?" In this the archdeacon was wrong as to his facts. Major Grantly had left Framley on the previous day, having stayed there only one night. "It is coming to that that one can trust no one—no one—literally no one." Mrs. Grantly perfectly understood that the archdeacon, in the agony of the moment, intended to exclude even herself from his confidence by that "no one;" but to this she was indifferent, understanding accurately when his words should be accepted as expressing his thoughts, and when they should be supposed to express only his anger.

"The probability is that no one at Lufton knew anything about Henry's partiality for Miss Crawley," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I tell you I think they are both at Framley together?"

"And I tell you that if they are, which I doubt, they are there simply by an accident. Besides, what does it matter? If they choose to marry each other, you and I cannot prevent them. They don't want any assistance from Lady Lufton, or anybody else. They have simply got to make up their own minds, and then no one can hinder them."

"And, therefore, you would like to see them brought together?"

"I say nothing about that, archdeacon; but I do say that we must take these things as they come. What can we do? Henry may go and stay with Lady Lufton if he pleases. You and I cannot prevent him."

After this the archdeacon walked away, and would not argue the matter any further with his wife at that moment.

He knew very well that he could not get the better of her, and was apt at such moments to think that she took an unfair advantage of him by keeping her temper. But he could not get out of his head the idea that perhaps on this very day things were being arranged between his son and Grace Crawley at Framley; and he resolved that he himself would go over and see what might be done. He would, at any rate, tell all his trouble to Lady Lufton, and beg his old friend to assist him. He could not think that such a one as he had always known Lady Lufton to be would approve of a marriage between Henry Grantly and Grace Crawley. At any rate, he would learn the truth. He had once been told that Grace Crawley had herself refused to marry his son, feeling that she would do wrong to inflict so great an injury upon any gentleman. He had not believed in so great a virtue. He could not believe in it now,—now, when he heard that Miss Crawley and his son were staying together in the same parish. Somebody must be doing him an injury. It could hardly be chance. But his presence at Framley might even yet have a good effect, and he would at least learn the truth. So he had himself driven to Barchester, and from Barchester he took post-horses to Framley.

As he came near to the village, he grew to be somewhat ashamed of himself, or, at least, nervous as to the mode in which he would proceed. The driver, turning round to him, had suggested that he supposed he was to drive to "My lady's." This injustice to Lord Lufton, to whom the house belonged, and with whom his mother lived as a guest, was very common in the county; for old Lady Lufton had lived at Framley Court through her son's long minority, and had kept the house there till his marriage; and even since his marriage she had been recognized as its presiding genius. It certainly was not the fault of old Lady Lufton, as she always spoke of everything as belonging either to her son or to her daughter-in-law. The archdeacon had been in doubt whether he would go to the Court or to the parsonage. Could he have done exactly as he wished, he would

have left the chaise and walked to the parsonage, so as to reach it without the noise and fuss incidental to a postilion's arrival. But that was impossible. He could not drop into Framley as though he had come from the clouds, and, therefore, he told the man to do as he had suggested. "To my lady's?" said the postilion. The archdeacon assented, and the man, with loud cracks of his whip, and with a spasmodic gallop along the short avenue, took the archdeacon up to the door of Lord Lufton's house. He asked for Lord Lufton first, putting on his pleasantest smile, so that the servant should not suspect the purpose, of which he was somewhat ashamed. Was Lord Lufton at home? Lord Lufton was not at home. Lord Lufton had gone up to London that morning, intending to return the day after to-morrow; but both my ladies were at home. So the archdeacon was shown into the room where both my ladies were sitting,—and with them he found Mrs. Robarts. Any one who had become acquainted with the habit of the Framley ladies would have known that this might very probably be the case. The archdeacon himself was as well aware as any one of the modes of life at Framley. The lord's wife was the parson's sister, and the parson's wife had from her infancy been the petted friend of the old lady. Of course they all lived very much together. Of course Mrs. Robarts was as much at home in the drawing-room of Framley Court as she was in her own drawing-room at the parsonage. Nevertheless, the archdeacon thought himself to be hardly used when he found that Mrs. Robarts was at the house.

"My dear archdeacon, who ever expected to see you?" said old Lady Lufton. Then the two younger women greeted him. And they all smiled on him pleasantly, and seemed overjoyed to see him. He was, in truth, a great favourite at Framley, and each of the three was glad to welcome him. They believed in the archdeacon at Framley, and felt for him that sort of love which ladies in the country do feel for their elderly male friends. There was not one of the three

who would not have taken much trouble to get anything for the archdeacon which they had thought the archdeacon would like. Even old Lady Lufton remembered what was his favourite soup, and always took care that he should have it when he dined at the Court. Young Lady Lufton would bring his tea to him as he sat in his chair. He was petted in the house, was allowed to poke the fire if he pleased, and called the servants by their names as though he were at home. He was compelled, therefore, to smile and to seem pleased; and it was not till after he had eaten his lunch, and had declared that he must return home to dinner, that the dowager gave him an opportunity of having the private conversation which he desired.

“Can I have a few minutes’ talk with you?” he said to her, whispering into her ear as they left the drawing-room together. So she led the way into her own sitting-room, telling him, as she asked him to be seated, that she had supposed that something special must have brought him over to Framley. “I should have asked you to come up here, even if you had not spoken,” she said.

“Then perhaps you know what has brought me over?” said the archdeacon.

“Not in the least,” said Lady Lufton. “I have not an idea. But I did not flatter myself that you would come so far on a morning call, merely to see us three ladies. I hope you did not want to see Ludovic, because he will not be back till to-morrow?”

“I wanted to see you, Lady Lufton.”

“That is lucky, as here I am. You may be pretty sure to find me here any day in the year.”

After this there was a little pause. The archdeacon hardly knew how to begin his story. In the first place he was in doubt whether Lady Lufton had ever heard of the preposterous match which his son had proposed to himself to make. In his anger at Plumstead he had felt sure that she knew all about it, and that she was assisting his son. But this belief had dwindled as his anger had dwindled; and as the

chaise had entered the parish of Framley he had told himself that it was quite impossible that she should know anything about it. Her manner had certainly been altogether in her favour since he had been in her house. There had been nothing of the consciousness of guilt in her demeanour. But, nevertheless, there was the coincidence! How had it come to pass that Grace Crawley and his son should be at Framley together? It might, indeed, be just possible that Flurry might have been wrong, and that his son had not been there at all.

“I suppose Miss Crawley is at the parsonage?” he said at last.

“Oh, yes; she is still there, and will remain there I should think for the next ten days.”

“Oh; I did not know,” said the archdeacon very coldly.

It seemed to Lady Lufton, who was as innocent as an unborn babe in the matter of the projected marriage, that her old friend the archdeacon was in a mind to persecute the Crawleys. He had on a former occasion taken upon himself to advise that Grace Crawley should not be entertained at Framley, and now it seemed that he had come all the way from Plumstead to say something further in the same strain. Lady Lufton, if he had anything further to say of that kind, would listen to him as a matter of course. She would listen to him and reply to him without temper. But she did not approve of it. She told herself silently that she could not approve of persecution or of interference. She therefore drew herself up, and pursed her mouth, and put on something of that look of severity which she could assume very visibly, if it so pleased her.

“Yes; she is still there, and I think that her visit will do her a great deal of good,” said Lady Lufton.

“When we talk of doing good to people,” said the archdeacon, “we often make terrible mistakes. It so often happens that we don’t know when we are doing good and when we are doing harm.”

“That is true, of course, Dr. Grantly, and must be so

necessarily, as our wisdom here below is so very limited. But I should think,—as far as I can see, that is,—that the kindness which my friend Mrs. Robarts is showing to this young lady must be beneficial. You know, archdeacon, I explained to you before that I could not quite agree with you in what you said as to leaving these people alone till after the trial. I thought that help was necessary to them at once."

The archdeacon sighed deeply. He ought to have been somewhat renovated in spirit by the tone in which Lady Lufton spoke to him, as it conveyed to him almost an absolute conviction that his first suspicion was incorrect. But any comfort which might have come to him from this source was marred by the feeling that he must announce his own disgrace. At any rate he must do so, unless he were contented to go back to Plumstead without having learned anything by his journey. He changed the tone of his voice, however, and asked a question,—as it might be altogether on a different subject. "I heard yesterday," he said, "that Henry was over here."

"He was here yesterday. He came the evening before, and dined and slept here, and went home yesterday morning."

"Was Miss Crawley with you that evening?"

"Miss Crawley? No; she would not come. She thinks it best not to go out while her father is in his present unfortunate position; and she is right."

"She is quite right in that," said the archdeacon; and then he paused again. He thought that it would be best for him to make a clean breast of it, and to trust to Lady Lufton's sympathy. "Did Henry go up to the parsonage?" he asked.

But still Lady Lufton did not suspect the truth. "I think he did," she replied, with an air of surprise. "I think I heard that he went up there to call on Mrs. Robarts after breakfast."

"No, Lady Lufton, he did not go up there to call on Mrs. Robarts. He went up there because he is making a fool of himself about that Miss Crawley. That is the truth. Now

you understand it all. I hope that Mrs. Robarts does not know it. I do hope for her own sake that Mrs. Robarts does not know it."

The archdeacon certainly had no longer any doubt as to Lady Lufton's innocence when he looked at her face as she heard these tidings. She had predicted that Grace Crawley would "make havoc," and could not, therefore, be altogether surprised at the idea that some gentleman should have fallen in love with her; but she had never supposed that the havoc might be made so early in her days, or on so great a quarry. "You don't mean to tell me that Henry Grantly is in love with Grace Crawley?" she replied.

"I mean to say that he says he is."

"Dear, dear, dear! I'm sure, archdeacon, that you will believe me when I say that I knew nothing about it."

"I am quite sure of that," said the archdeacon dolefully.

"Or I certainly should not have been glad to see him here. But the house, you know, is not mine, Dr. Grantly. I could have done nothing if I had known it. But only to think—; well, to be sure. She has not lost time, at any rate."

Now this was not at all the light in which the archdeacon wished that the matter should be regarded. He had been desirous that Lady Lufton should be horror-stricken by the tidings, but it seemed to him that she regarded the iniquity almost as a good joke. What did it matter how young or how old the girl might be? She came of poor people,—of people who had no friends,—of disgraced people; and Lady Lufton ought to feel that such a marriage would be a terrible misfortune and a terrible crime. "I need hardly tell you, Lady Lufton," said the archdeacon, "that I shall set my face against it as far as it is in my power to do so."

"If they both be resolved I suppose you can hardly prevent it."

"Of course I cannot prevent it. Of course I cannot prevent it. If he will break my heart and his mother's,—and his sister's,—of course I cannot prevent it. If he will ruin himself, he must have his own way."

“Ruin himself, Dr. Grantly!”

“They will have enough to live upon,—somewhere in Spain or France.” The scorn expressed in the archdeacon’s voice as he spoke of Pau as being “somewhere in Spain or France,” should have been heard to be understood. “No doubt they will have enough to live upon.”

“Do you mean to say that it will make a difference as to your own property, Dr. Grantly?”

“Certainly it will, Lady Lufton. I told Henry when I first heard of the thing,—before he had definitely made any offer to the girl,—that I should withdraw from him altogether the allowance that I now make him, if he married her. And I told him also, that if he persisted in his folly I should think it my duty to alter my will.”

“I am sorry for that, Dr. Grantly.”

“Sorry! And am not I sorry? Sorrow is no sufficient word. I am broken-hearted. Lady Lufton, it is killing me. It is indeed. I love him; I love him;—I love him as you have loved your son. But what is the use? What can he be to me when he shall have married the daughter of such a man as that?”

Lady Lufton sat for a while silent, thinking of a certain episode in her own life. There had been a time when her son was desirous of making a marriage which she had thought would break her heart. She had for a time moved heaven and earth,—as far as she knew how to move them,—to prevent the marriage. But at last she had yielded,—not from lack of power, for the circumstances had been such that at the moment of yielding she had still the power in her hand of staying the marriage,—but she had yielded because she had perceived that her son was in earnest. She had yielded, and had kissed the dust; but from the moment in which her lips had so touched the ground, she had taken great joy in the new daughter whom her son had brought into the house. Since that she had learned to think that young people might perhaps be right, and that old people might perhaps be wrong. This trouble of her friend the archdeacon’s was very like her own old trouble. “And he is engaged to

hernow?" she said, when those thoughts had passed through her mind.

"Yes;—that is, no. I am not sure. I do not know how to make myself sure."

"I am sure Major Grantly will tell you all the truth as it exists."

"Yes; he'll tell me the truth,—as far as he knows it. I do not see that there is much anxiety to spare me in the matter. He is desirous rather of making me understand that I have no power of saving him from his own folly. Of course I have no power of saving him."

"But is he engaged to her?"

"He says that she has refused him. But of course that means nothing."

Again the archdeacon's position was very like Lady Lufton's position, as it had existed before her son's marriage. In that case also the young lady, who was now Lady Lufton's own daughter and dearest friend, had refused the lover who proposed to her, although the marriage was so much to her advantage,—loving him, too, the while, with her whole heart, as it was natural to suppose that Grace Crawley might so love her lover. The more she thought of the similarity of the stories, the stronger were her sympathies on the side of poor Grace. Nevertheless, she would comfort her old friend if she knew how; and of course she could not but admit to herself that the match was one which must be a cause of real sorrow to him. "I don't know why her refusal should mean nothing," said Lady Lufton.

"Of course a girl refuses at first,—a girl, I mean, in such circumstances as hers. She can't but feel that more is offered to her than she ought to take, and that she is bound to go through the ceremony of declining. But my anger is not with her, Lady Lufton."

"I do not see how it can be."

"No; it is not with her. If she becomes his wife I trust that I may never see her."

"Oh, Dr. Grantly!"

"I do; I do. How can it be otherwise with me? But I shall have no quarrel with her. With him I must quarrel."

"I do not see why," said Lady Lufton.

"You do not? Does he not set me at defiance?"

"At his age surely a son has a right to marry as he pleases."

"If he took her out of the streets, then it would be the same?" said the archdeacon with bitter anger.

"No;—for such a one would herself be bad."

"Or if she were the daughter of a huxter out of the city?"

"No again;—for in that case her want of education would probably unfit her for your society."

"Her father's disgrace, then, should be a matter of indifference to me, Lady Lufton?"

"I did not say so. In the first place, her father is not disgraced,—not as yet; and we do not know whether he may ever be disgraced. You will hardly be disposed to say that persecution from the palace disgraces a clergyman in Bersetshire."

"All the same, I believe that the man was guilty," said the archdeacon.

"Wait and see, my friend, before you condemn him altogether. But, be that as it may, I acknowledge that the marriage is one which must naturally be distasteful to you."

"Oh, Lady Lufton! if you only knew! If you only knew!"

"I do know; and I feel for you. But I think that your son has a right to expect that you should not show the same repugnance to such a marriage as this as you would have had a right to show had he suggested to himself such a wife as those at which you just now hinted. Of course you can advise him, and make him understand your feelings; but I cannot think you will be justified in quarrelling with him, or in changing your views towards him as regards money, seeing that Miss Crawley is an educated lady, who has done nothing to forfeit your respect." A heavy cloud came upon the archdeacon's brow as he heard these words, but he did not make any immediate answer. "Of course, my friend,"

continued Lady Lufton, "I should not have ventured to say so much to you, had you not come to me, as it were, for my opinion."

"I came here because I thought Henry was here," said the archdeacon.

"If I have said too much I beg your pardon."

"No; you have not said too much. It is not that. You and I are such old friends that either may say almost anything to the other."

"Yes;—just so. And therefore I have ventured to speak my mind," said Lady Lufton.

"Of course;—and I am obliged to you. But, Lady Lufton, you do not understand yet how this hits me. Everything in life that I have done, I have done for my children. I am wealthy, but I have not used my wealth for myself, because I have desired that they should be able to hold their heads high in the world. All my ambition has been for them, and all the pleasure which I have anticipated for myself in my old age is that which I have hoped to receive from their credit. As for Henry, he might have had anything he wanted from me in the way of money. He expressed a wish, a few months since, to go into Parliament, and I promised to help him as far as ever I could go. I have kept up the game altogether for him. He, the younger son of a working parish parson, has had everything that could be given to the eldest son of a country gentleman,—more than is given to the eldest son of many a peer. I have hoped that he would marry again, but I have never cared that he should marry for money. I have been willing to do anything for him myself. But, Lady Lufton, a father does feel that he should have some return for all this. No one can imagine that Henry ever supposed that a bride from that wretched place at Hogglestock could be welcomed among us. He knew that he would break our hearts, and he did not care for it. That is what I feel. Of course he has the power to do as he likes;—and of course I have the power to do as I like also with what is my own."

Lady Lufton was a very good woman, devoted to her duties, affectionate and just to those about her, truly religious, and charitable from her nature; but I doubt whether the thorough worldliness of the archdeacon's appeal struck her as it will strike the reader. People are so much more worldly in practice than they are in theory, so much keener after their own gratification in detail than they are in the abstract, that the narrative of many an adventure would shock us, though the same adventure would not shock us in the action. One girl tells another how she has changed her mind in love; and the friend sympathizes with the friend, and perhaps applauds. Had the story been told in print, the friend who had listened with equanimity would have read of such vacillation with indignation. She who vacillated herself would have hated her own performance when brought before her judgment as a matter in which she had no personal interest. Very fine things are written every day about honesty and truth, and men read them with a sort of external conviction that a man, if he be anything of a man at all, is of course honest and true. But when the internal convictions are brought out between two or three who are personally interested together,—between two or three who feel that their little gathering is, so to say, "tiled,"—those internal convictions differ very much from the external convictions. This man, in his confidences, asserts broadly that he does not mean to be thrown over, and that man has a project for throwing over somebody else; and the intention of each is that scruples are not to stand in the way of his success. The "Ruat cœlum, fiat justitia," was said, no doubt, from an outside balcony to a crowd, and the speaker knew that he was talking buncombe. The "Rem, si possis recte, si non, quocunque modo," was whispered into the ear in a club smoking-room, and the whisperer intended that his words should prevail.

Lady Lufton had often heard her friend the archdeacon preach, and she knew well the high tone which he could take as to the necessity of trusting to our hopes for the

future for all our true happiness; and yet she sympathized with him when he told her that he was broken-hearted because his son would take a step which might possibly interfere with his worldly prosperity. Had the archdeacon been preaching about matrimony, he would have recommended young men, in taking wives to themselves, especially to look for young women who feared the Lord. But in talking about his own son's wife, no word as to her eligibility or non-eligibility in this respect escaped his lips. Had he talked on the subject till nightfall no such word would have been spoken. Had any friend of his own, man or woman, in discussing such a matter with him and asking his advice upon it, alluded to the fear of the Lord, the allusion would have been distasteful to him and would have smacked to his palate of hypocrisy. Lady Lufton, who understood as well as any woman what it was to be "tiled" with a friend, took all this in good part. The archdeacon had spoken out of his heart what was in his heart. One of his children had married a marquis. Another might probably become a bishop,—perhaps an archbishop. The third might be a county squire,—high among county squires. But he could only so become by walking warily;—and now he was bent on marrying the penniless daughter of an impoverished half-mad country curate, who was about to be tried for stealing twenty pounds! Lady Lufton, in spite of all her arguments, could not refuse her sympathy to her old friend.

"After all, from what you say, I suppose they are not engaged."

"I do not know," said the archdeacon. "I cannot tell!"

"And what do you wish me to do?"

"Oh,—nothing. I came over, as I said before, because I thought he was here. I think it right, before he has absolutely committed himself, to take every means in my power to make him understand that I shall withdraw from him all pecuniary assistance,—now and for the future."

"My friend, that threat seems to me to be so terrible."

"It is the only power I have left to me."

“But you, who are so affectionate by nature, would never adhere to it.”

“I will try. I will do my best to be firm. I will at once put everything beyond my control after my death.” The archdeacon, as he uttered these terrible words,—words which were awful to Lady Lufton’s ears,—resolved that he would endeavour to nurse his own wrath; but, at the same time, almost hated himself for his own pusillanimity, because he feared that his wrath would die away before he should have availed himself of its heat.

“I would do nothing rash of that kind,” said Lady Lufton. “Your object is to prevent the marriage,—not to punish him for it when once he has made it.”

“He is not to have his own way in everything, Lady Lufton.”

“But you should first try to prevent it.”

“What can I do to prevent it?”

Lady Lufton paused for a couple of minutes before she replied. She had a scheme in her head, but it seemed to her to savour of cruelty. And yet at present it was her chief duty to assist her old friend, if any assistance could be given. There could hardly be a doubt that such a marriage as this, of which they were speaking, was in itself an evil. In her case, the case of her son, there had been no question of a trial, of money stolen, of aught that was in truth disgraceful. “I think if I were you, Dr. Grantly,” she said, “that I would see the young lady while I was here.”

“See her myself?” said the archdeacon. The idea of seeing Grace Crawley himself had, up to this moment, never entered his head.

“I think I would do so.”

“I think I will,” said the archdeacon, after a pause. Then he got up from his chair. “If I am to do it, I had better do it at once.”

“Be gentle with her, my friend.” The archdeacon paused again. He certainly had entertained the idea of encountering Miss Crawley with severity rather than gentleness. Lady

Lufton rose from her seat, and coming up to him, took one of his hands between her own two. "Be gentle to her," she said. "You have owned that she has done nothing wrong." The archdeacon bowed his head in token of assent and left the room.

Poor Grace Crawley!

CHAPTER LVII

A Double Pledge

THE archdeacon, as he walked across from the court to the parsonage, was very thoughtful and his steps were very slow. This idea of seeing Miss Crawley herself had been suggested to him suddenly, and he had to determine how he would bear himself towards her, and what he would say to her. Lady Lufton had beseeched him to be gentle with her. Was the mission one in which gentleness would be possible? Must it not be his object to make this young lady understand that she could not be right in desiring to come into his family and share in all his good things when she had got no good things of her own,—nothing but evil things to bring with her? And how could this be properly explained to the young lady in gentle terms? Must he not be round with her, and give her to understand in plain words,—the plainest which he could use,—that she would not get his good things, though she would most certainly impose the burden of all her evil things on the man whom she was proposing to herself as a husband. He remembered very well as he went, that he had been told that Miss Crawley had herself refused the offer, feeling herself to be unfit for the honour tendered to her; but he suspected the sincerity of such a refusal. Calculating in his own mind the unreasonably great advantages which would be conferred on such a young lady as Miss Crawley by a marriage

with his son, he declared to himself that any girl must be very wicked indeed who should expect, or even accept, so much more than was her due;—but nevertheless he could not bring himself to believe that any girl, when so tempted, would, in sincerity, decline to commit this great wickedness. If he was to do any good by seeing Miss Crawley, must it not consist in a proper explanation to her of the selfishness, abomination, and altogether damnable blackness of such wickedness as this on the part of a young woman in her circumstances? “Heaven and earth!” he must say, “here are you, without a penny in your pocket, with hardly decent raiment on your back, with a thief for your father, and you think that you are to come and share in all the wealth that the Grantlys have amassed, that you are to have a husband with broad acres, a big house, and game preserves, and become one of a family whose name has never been touched by a single accusation,—no, not by a suspicion? No;—injustice such as that shall never be done betwixt you and me. You may wring my heart, and you may ruin my son; but the broad acres and the big house, and the game preserves, and the rest of it, shall never be your reward for doing so.” How was all that to be told effectively to a young woman in gentle words? And then how was a man in the archdeacon’s position to be desirous of gentle words,—gentle words which would not be efficient,—when he knew well in his heart of hearts that he had nothing but his threats on which to depend. He had no more power of disinheriting his own son for such an offence as that contemplated than he had of blowing out his own brains, and he knew that it was so. He was a man incapable of such persistency of wrath against one whom he loved. He was neither cruel enough nor strong enough to do such a thing. He could only threaten to do it, and make what best use he might of threats, whilst threats might be of avail. In spite of all that he had said to his wife, to Lady Lufton, and to himself, he knew very well that if his son did sin in this way he, the father, would forgive the sin of the son.

In going across from the front gate of the Court to the parsonage there was a place where three roads met, and on this spot there stood a finger-post. Round this finger-post there was now pasted a placard, which at once arrested the archdeacon's eye:—"Cosby Lodge—Sale of furniture—Growing crops to be sold on the grounds. Three hunters. A brown gelding warranted for saddle or harness!"—The archdeacon himself had given the brown gelding to his son, as a great treasure.—"Three Alderney cows, two cow-calves, a low phaeton, a gig, two ricks of hay." In this fashion were proclaimed in odious details all those comfortable additions to a gentleman's house in the country, with which the archdeacon was so well acquainted. Only last November he had recommended his son to buy a certain new-invented clod-crusher, and the clod-crusher had of course been bought. The bright blue paint upon it had not as yet given way to the stains of the ordinary farmyard muck and mire;—and here was the clod-crusher advertised for sale! The archdeacon did not want his son to leave Cosby Lodge. He knew well enough that his son need not leave Cosby Lodge. Why had the foolish fellow been in such a hurry with his hideous ill-conditioned advertisements? Gentle! How was he in such circumstances to be gentle? He raised his umbrella and poked angrily at the disgusting notice. The iron ferule caught the paper at a chink in the post, and tore it from the top to the bottom. But what was the use? A horrid ugly bill lying torn in such a spot would attract only more attention than one fixed to a post. He could not descend, however, to give to it further attention, but passed on up to the parsonage. Gentle, indeed!

Nevertheless Archdeacon Grantly was a gentleman, and never yet had dealt more harshly with any woman than we have sometimes seen him do with his wife,—when he would say to her an angry word or two with a good deal of marital authority. His wife, who knew well what his angry words were worth, never even suggested to herself that she had cause for complaint on that head. Had she known that the

archdeacon was about to undertake such a mission as this which he had now in hand, she would not have warned him to be gentle. She, indeed, would have strongly advised him not to undertake the mission, cautioning him that the young lady would probably get the better of him.

"Grace my dear," said Mrs. Robarts, coming up into the nursery in which Miss Crawley was sitting with the children, "come out here a moment, will you?" Then Grace left the children and went out into the passage. "My dear, there is a gentleman in the drawing-room who asks to see you."

"A gentleman, Mrs. Robarts! What gentleman?" But Grace, though she asked the question, conceived that the gentleman must be Henry Grantly. Her mind did not suggest to her the possibility of any other gentleman coming to see her.

"You must not be surprised, or allow yourself to be frightened."

"Oh, Mrs. Robarts, who is it?"

"It is Major Grantly's father."

"The archdeacon?"

"Yes, dear; Archdeacon Grantly. He is in the drawing-room."

"Must I see him, Mrs. Robarts?"

"Well, Grace,—I think you must. I hardly know how you can refuse. He is an intimate friend of everybody here at Framley."

"What will he say to me?"

"Nay; that I cannot tell. I suppose you know——"

"He has come, no doubt, to bid me have nothing to say to his son. He need not have troubled himself. But he may say what he likes. I am not a coward, and I will go to him."

"Stop a moment, Grace. Come into my room for an instant. The children have pulled your hair about." But, Grace, though she followed Mrs. Robarts into the bedroom, would have nothing done to her hair. She was too proud for that,—and we may say, also, too little confident

in any good which such resources might effect on her behalf. "Never mind about that," she said. "What am I to say to him?" Mrs. Robarts paused before she replied, feeling that the matter was one which required some deliberation. "Tell me what I must say to him?" said Grace, repeating her question.

"I hardly know what your own feelings are, my dear."

"Yes, you do. You do know. If I had all the world to give, I would give it all to Major Grantly."

"Tell him that, then."

"No, I will not tell him that. Never mind about my frock, Mrs. Robarts. I do not care for that. I will tell him that I love his son and his granddaughter too well to injure them. I will tell him nothing else. I might as well go now."

Mrs. Robarts, as she looked at Grace, was astonished at the serenity of her face. And yet when her hand was on the drawing-room door Grace hesitated, looked back, and trembled. Mrs. Robarts blew a kiss to her from the stairs; and then the door was opened, and the girl found herself in the presence of the archdeacon. He was standing on the rug, with his back to the fire, and his heavy ecclesiastical hat was placed on the middle of the round table. The hat caught Grace's eye at the moment of her entrance, and she felt that all the thunders of the Church were contained within it. And then the archdeacon himself was so big and so clerical, and so imposing! Her father's aspect was severe, but the severity of her father's face was essentially different from that expressed by the archdeacon. Whatever impression came from her father came from the man himself. There was no outward adornment there; there was, so to say, no wig about Mr. Crawley. Now the archdeacon was not exactly adorned; but he was so thoroughly imbued with high clerical belongings and sacerdotal fitnesses as to appear always as a walking, sitting, or standing impersonation of parsondom. To poor Grace, as she entered the room, he appeared to be an impersonation of parsondom in its severest aspect.

"Miss Crawley, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said she, curtseying ever so slightly, as she stood before him at some considerable distance.

His first idea was that his son must be indeed a fool if he was going to give up Cosby Lodge and all Barsetshire, and retire to Pau, for so slight and unattractive a creature as he now saw before him. But this idea stayed with him only for a moment. As he continued to gaze at her during the interview he came to perceive that there was very much more than he had perceived at the first glance, and that his son, after all, had had eyes to see, though perhaps not a heart to understand.

"Will you not take a chair?" he said. Then Grace sat down, still at a distance from the archdeacon, and he kept his place upon the rug. He felt that there would be a difficulty in making her feel the full force of his eloquence all across the room; and yet he did not know how to bring himself nearer to her. She became suddenly very important in his eyes, and he was to some extent afraid of her. She was so slight, so meek, so young; and yet there was about her something so beautifully feminine,—and, withal, so like a lady,—that he felt instinctively that he could not attack her with harsh words. Had her lips been full, and her colour high, and had her eyes rolled, had she put forth against him any of that ordinary artillery with which youthful feminine batteries are charged, he would have been ready to rush to the combat. But this girl, about whom his son had gone mad, sat there as passively as though she were conscious of the possession of no artillery. There was not a single gun fired from beneath her eyelids. He knew not why, but he respected his son now more than he had respected him for the last two months;—more, perhaps, than he had ever respected him before. He was as eager as ever against the marriage;—but in thinking of his son in what he said and did after these few first moments of the interview, he ceased to think of him with contempt. The creature before him was a woman who grew in his opinion till he began to feel

that she was in truth fit to be the wife of his son—if only she were not a pauper, and the daughter of a mad curate, and, alas! too probably, of a thief. Though his feeling towards the girl was changed, his duty to himself, his family, and his son, was the same as ever, and therefore he began his task.

“Perhaps you had not expected to see me?” he said.

“No, indeed, sir.”

“Nor had I intended when I came over here to call on my old friend, Lady Lufton, to come up to this house. But as I knew that you were here, Miss Crawley, I thought that upon the whole it would be better that I should see you.” Then he paused as though he expected that Grace would say something; but Grace had nothing to say. “Of course you must understand, Miss Crawley, that I should not venture to speak to you on this subject unless I myself were very closely interested in it.” He had not yet said what was the subject, and it was not probable that Grace should give him any assistance by affecting to understand this without direct explanation from him. She sat quite motionless, and did not even aid him by showing by her altered colour that she understood his purpose. “My son has told me,” said he, “that he has professed an attachment for you, Miss Crawley.”

Then there was another pause, and Grace felt that she was compelled to say something. “Major Grantly has been very good to me,” she said, and then she hated herself for having uttered words which were so tame and unwomanly in their spirit. Of course her lover’s father would despise her for having so spoken. After all it did not much signify. If he would only despise her and go away, it would perhaps be for the best.

“I do not know about being good,” said the archdeacon. “I think he is good. I think he means to be good.”

“I am sure he is good,” said Grace, warmly.

“You know he has a daughter, Miss Crawley?”

“Oh, yes; I know Edith well.”

“Of course his first duty is to her. Is it not? And he owes much to his family. Do you not feel that?”

“Of course I feel it, sir.” The poor girl had always heard Dr. Grantly spoken of as the archdeacon, but she did not in the least know what she ought to call him.

“Now, Miss Crawley, pray listen to me; I will speak to you very openly. I must speak to you openly, because it is my duty on my son’s behalf—but I will endeavour to speak to you kindly also. Of yourself I have heard nothing but what is favourable, and there is no reason as yet why I should not respect and esteem you.” Grace told herself that she would do nothing which ought to forfeit his respect and esteem, but that she did not care two straws whether his respect and esteem were bestowed on her or not. She was striving after something very different from that. “If my son were to marry you, he would greatly injure himself, and would very greatly injure his child.” Again he paused. He had told her to listen, and she was resolved that she would listen,—unless he should say something which might make a word from her necessary at the moment. “I do not know whether there does at present exist any engagement between you?”

“There is no engagement, sir.”

“I am glad of that,—very glad of it. I do not know whether you are aware that my son is dependent upon me for the greater part of his income. It is so, and as I am so circumstanced with my son, of course I feel the closest possible concern in his future prospects.” The archdeacon did not know how to explain clearly why the fact of his making a son an annual allowance should give him a warmer interest in his son’s affairs than he might have had had the major been altogether independent of him; but he trusted that Grace would understand this by her own natural lights. “Now, Miss Crawley, of course I cannot wish to say a word that shall hurt your feelings. But there are reasons

“I know,” said she, interrupting him. “Papa is accused

of stealing money. He did not steal it, but people think he did. And then we are so very poor."

"You do understand me then,—and I feel grateful; I do indeed."

"I don't think our being poor ought to signify a bit," said Grace. "Papa is a gentleman and a clergyman, and mamma is a lady."

"But, my dear——"

"I know I ought not to be your son's wife as long as people think that papa stole the money. If he had stolen it, I ought never to be Major Grantly's wife,—or anybody's wife. I know that very well. And as for Edith,—I would sooner die than do anything that would be bad to her."

The archdeacon had now left the rug, and advanced till he was almost close to the chair on which Grace was sitting. "My dear," he said, "what you say does you very much honour,—very much honour indeed." Now that he was close to her, he could look into her eyes, and he could see the exact form of her features, and could understand,—could not help understanding,—the character of her countenance. It was a noble face, having in it nothing that was poor, nothing that was mean, nothing that was shapeless. It was a face that promised infinite beauty, with a promise that was on the very verge of fulfilment. There was a play about her mouth as she spoke, and a curl in her nostril as the eager words came from her, which almost made the selfish father give way. Why had they not told him that she was such a one as this? Why had not Henry himself spoken of the speciality of her beauty? No man in England knew better than the archdeacon the difference between beauty of one kind and beauty of another kind in a woman's face,—the one beauty, which comes from health and youth and animal spirits, and which belongs to the miller's daughter, and the other beauty, which shows itself in fine lines and a noble spirit,—the beauty which comes from breeding. "What you say does you very much honour indeed," said the archdeacon.

"I should not mind at all about being poor," said Grace.
"No; no; no," said the archdeacon.

"Poor as we are,—and no clergyman, I think, ever was so poor,—I should have done as your son asked me at once, if it had been only that,—because I love him."

"If you love him you will not wish to injure him."

"I will not injure him. Sir, there is my promise." And now as she spoke she rose from her chair, and standing close to the archdeacon, laid her hand very lightly on the sleeve of his coat. "There is my promise. As long as people say that papa stole the money, I will never marry your son. There."

The archdeacon was still looking down at her, and feeling the slight touch of her fingers, raised his arm a little as though to welcome the pressure. He looked into her eyes, which were turned eagerly towards his, and when doing so was quite sure that the promise would be kept. It would have been sacrilege,—he felt that it would have been sacrilege,—to doubt such a promise. He almost relented. His soft heart, which was never very well under his own control, gave way so far that he was nearly moved to tell her that, on his son's behalf, he acquitted her of the promise. What could any man's son do better than have such a woman for his wife? It would have been of no avail had he made her such offer. The pledge she had given had not been wrung from her by his influence, nor could his influence have availed ought with her towards the alteration of her purpose. It was not the archdeacon who had taught her that it would not be her duty to take disgrace into the house of the man she loved. As he looked down upon her face two tears formed themselves in his eyes, and gradually trickled down his old nose. "My dear," he said, "if this cloud passes away from you, you shall come to us and be my daughter." And thus he also pledged himself. There was a dash of generosity about the man, in spite of his selfishness, which always made him desirous of giving largely to those who gave largely to him. He would fain that his gifts should be the bigger, if it

were possible. He longed at this moment to tell her that the dirty cheque should go for nothing. He would have done it, I think, but that it was impossible for him so to speak in her presence of that which moved her so greatly.

He had contrived that her hand should fall from his arm into his grasp, and now for a moment he held it. "You are a good girl," he said—"a dear, dear, good girl. When this cloud has passed away, you shall come to us and be our daughter."

"But it will never pass away," said Grace.

"Let us hope that it may. Let us hope that it may." Then he stooped over her and kissed her, and leaving the room, got out into the hall and thence into the garden, and so away, without saying a word of adieu to Mrs. Robarts.

As he walked across to the Court, whither he was obliged to go, because of his chaise, he was lost in surprise at what had occurred. He had gone to the parsonage, hating the girl, and despising his son. Now, as he retraced his steps, his feelings were altogether changed. He admired the girl,—and as for his son, even his anger was for the moment altogether gone. He would write to his son at once and implore him to stop the sale. He would tell his son all that had occurred, or rather would make Mrs. Grantly do so. In respect to his son he was quite safe. He thought at that moment that he was safe. There would be no use in hurling further threats at him. If Crawley were found guilty of stealing the money, there was the girl's promise. If he were acquitted, there was his own pledge. He remembered perfectly well that the girl had said more than this,—that she had not confined her assurance to the verdict of a jury, that she had protested that she would not accept Major Grantly's hand as long as people thought that her father had stolen the cheque; but the archdeacon felt that it would be ignoble to hold her closely to her words. The event, according to his ideas of the compact, was to depend upon the verdict of the jury. If the jury should find Mr. Crawley not guilty, all objection on his part to the marriage was to

be withdrawn. And he would keep his word! In such case it should be withdrawn.

When he came to the rags of the auctioneer's bill, which he had before torn down with his umbrella, he stopped a moment to consider how he would act at once. In the first place he would tell his son that his threats were withdrawn, and would ask him to remain at Cosby Lodge. He would write the letter as he passed through Barchester, on his way home, so that his son might receive it on the following morning; and he would refer the major to his mother for a full explanation of the circumstances. Those odious bills must be removed from every barn-door and wall in the county. At the present moment his anger against his son was chiefly directed against his ill-judged haste in having put up those ill-omened posters. Then he paused to consider what must be his wish as to the verdict of the jury. He had pledged himself to abide by the verdict, and he could not but have a wish on the subject. Could he desire in his heart that Mr. Crawley should be found guilty? He stood still for a moment thinking of this, and then he walked on, shaking his head. If it might be possible he would have no wish on the subject whatsoever.

"Well!" said Lady Lufton, stopping him in the passage,
— "have you seen her?"

"Yes; I have seen her."

"Well?"

"She is a good girl,—a very good girl. I am in a great hurry, and hardly know how to tell you more now."

"You say that she is a good girl?"

"I say that she is a very good girl. An angel could not have behaved better. I will tell you all some day, Lady Lufton, but I can hardly tell you now."

When the archdeacon was gone old Lady Lufton confided to young Lady Lufton her very strong opinion that many months would not be gone by before Grace Crawley would be the mistress of Cosby Lodge. "It will be great promotion," said the old lady, with a little toss of her head

When Grace was interrogated afterwards by Mrs. Robarts as to what had passed between her and the archdeacon she had very little to say as to the interview. "No, he did not scold me," she replied to an inquiry from her friend. "But he spoke about your engagement?" said Mrs. Robarts. "There is no engagement," said Grace. "But I suppose you acknowledged, my dear, that a future engagement is quite possible?" "I told him, Mrs. Robarts," Grace answered, after hesitating for a moment, "that I would never marry his son as long as papa was suspected by any one in the world of being a thief. And I will keep my word." But she said nothing to Mrs. Robarts of the pledge which the archdeacon had made to her.

CHAPTER LVIII

The Cross-Grainedness of Men

BY the time that the archdeacon reached Plumstead his enthusiasm in favour of Grace Crawley had somewhat cooled itself; and the language which from time to time he prepared for conveying his impressions to his wife, became less fervid as he approached his home. There was his pledge, and by that he would abide;—and so much he would make both his wife and his son understand. But any idea which he might have entertained for a moment of extending the promise he had given and relaxing that given to him was gone before he saw his own chimneys. Indeed, I fear he had by that time begun to feel that the only salvation now open to him must come from the jury's verdict. If the jury should declare Mr. Crawley to be guilty, then —; he would not say even to himself that in such case all would be right, but he did feel that much as he might regret the fate of the poor Crawleys, and of the girl whom in his warmth he had declared to be almost an angel, nevertheless

to him personally such a verdict would bring consolatory comfort.

“I have seen Miss Crawley,” he said to his wife, as soon as he had closed the door of his study, before he had been two minutes out of the chaise. He had determined that he would dash at the subject at once, and he thus carried his resolution into effect.

“You have seen Grace Crawley?”

“Yes; I went up to the parsonage and called upon her. Lady Lufton advised me to do so.”

“And Henry?”

“Oh, Henry has gone. He was only there one night. I suppose he saw her, but I am not sure.”

“Would not Miss Crawley tell you?”

“I forgot to ask her.” Mrs. Grantly, at hearing this, expressed her surprise by opening wide her eyes. He had gone all the way over to Framley on purpose to look after his son, and learn what were his doings, and when there he had forgotten to ask the person who could have given him better information than any one else! “But it does not signify,” continued the archdeacon; “she said enough to me to make that of no importance.”

“And what did she say?”

“She said that she would never consent to marry Henry as long as there was any suspicion abroad as to her father’s guilt.”

“And you believe her promise?”

“Certainly I do; I do not doubt it in the least. I put implicit confidence in her. And I have promised her that if her father is acquitted,—I will withdraw my opposition.”

“No!”

“But I have. And you would have done the same had you been there.”

“I doubt that, my dear. I am not so impulsive as you are.”

“You could not have helped yourself. You would have felt yourself obliged to be equally generous with her. She came up to me and she put her hand upon me——”

“Psha!” said Mrs. Grantly. “But she did, my dear; and then she said, ‘I promise you that I will not become your son’s wife while people think that papa stole this money.’ What else could I do?”

“And is she pretty?”

“Very pretty; very beautiful.”

“And like a lady?”

“Quite like a lady. There is no mistake about that.”

“And she behaved well?”

“Admirably,” said the archdeacon, who was in a measure compelled to justify the generosity into which he had been betrayed by his feelings.

“Then she is a paragon,” said Mrs. Grantly.

“I don’t know what you may call a paragon, my dear. I say that she is a lady, and that she is extremely good-looking, and that she behaved very well. I cannot say less in her favour. I am sure you would not say less yourself, if you had been present.”

“She must be a wonderful young woman.”

“I don’t know anything about her being wonderful.”

“She must be wonderful when she has succeeded both with the son and with the father.”

“I wish you had been there instead of me,” said the archdeacon, angrily. Mrs. Grantly very probably wished so also, feeling that in that case a more serene mode of business would have been adopted. How keenly susceptible the archdeacon still was to the influences of feminine charms, no one knew better than Mrs. Grantly, and whenever she became aware that he had been in this way seduced from the wisdom of his cooler judgment she always felt something akin to indignation against the seducer. As for her husband, she probably told herself at such moments that he was an old goose. “If you had been there, and Henry with you, you would have made a great deal worse job of it than I have done,” said the archdeacon.

“I don’t say you have made a bad job of it, my dear,” said Mrs. Grantly. “But it’s past eight, and you must be

terribly in want of your dinner. Had you not better go up and dress?"

In the evening the plan of the future campaign was arranged between them. The archdeacon would not write to his son at all. In passing through Barchester he had abandoned his idea of despatching a note from the hotel, feeling that such a note as would be required was not easily written in a hurry. Mrs. Grantly would now write to her son, telling him that circumstances had changed, that it would be altogether unnecessary for him to sell his furniture, and begging him to come over and see his father without a day's delay. She wrote her letter that night, and read to the archdeacon all that she had written,—with the exception of the postscript:—"You may be quite sure that there will be no unpleasantness with your father." That was the postscript which was not communicated to the archdeacon.

On the third day after that Henry Grantly did come over to Plumstead. His mother in her letter to him had not explained how it had come to pass that the sale of his furniture would be unnecessary. His father had given him to understand distinctly that his income would be withdrawn from him unless he would express his intention of giving up Miss Crawley; and it had been admitted among them all that Cosby Lodge must be abandoned if this were done. He certainly would not give up Grace Crawley. Sooner than that, he would give up every stick in his possession, and go and live in New Zealand if it were necessary. Not only had Grace's conduct to him made him thus firm, but the natural bent of his own disposition had tended that way also. His father had attempted to dictate to him, and sooner than submit to that he would sell the coat off his back. Had his father confined his opposition to advice, and had Miss Crawley been less firm in her view of her duty, the major might have been less firm also. But things had so gone that he was determined to be fixed as granite. If others would not be moved from their resolves, neither would he. Such being the state of his mind, he could not understand why he was thus sum-

moned to Plumstead. He had already written over to Pau about his house, and it was well that he should, at any rate, see his mother before he started. He was willing, therefore, to go to Plumstead, but he took no steps as to the withdrawal of those auctioneer's bills to which the archdeacon so strongly objected. When he drove into the rectory yard, his father was standing there before him. "Henry," he said, "I am very glad to see you. I am very much obliged to you for coming." Then Henry got out of his cart and shook hands with his father, and the archdeacon began to talk about the weather. "Your mother has gone into Barchester to see your grandfather," said the archdeacon. "If you are not tired, we might as well take a walk. I want to go up as far as Flurry's cottage." The major of course declared that he was not at all tired, and that he should be delighted of all things to go up and see old Flurry, and thus they started. Young Grantly had not even been into the house before he left the yard with his father. Of course, he was thinking of the coming sale at Cosby Lodge, and of his future life at Pau, and of his injured position in the world. There would be no longer any occasion for him to be solicitous as to the Plumstead foxes. Of course these things were in his mind; but he could not begin to speak of them till his father did so. "I'm afraid your grandfather is not very strong," said the archdeacon, shaking his head. "I fear he won't be with us very long."

"Is it so bad as that, sir?"

"Well, you know, he is an old man, Henry; and he was always somewhat old for his age. He will be eighty, if he lives two years longer, I think. But he'll never reach eighty; —never. You must go and see him before you go back home; you must indeed." The major, of course, promised that he would see his grandfather, and the archdeacon told his son how nearly the old man had fallen in the passage between the cathedral and the deanery. In this way they had nearly made their way up to the gamekeeper's cottage without a word of reference to any subject that touched upon

the matter of which each of them was of course thinking. Whether the major intended to remain at home or to live at Pau, the subject of Mr. Harding's health was a natural topic for conversation between him and his father; but when his father stopped suddenly, and began to tell him how a fox had been trapped on Darvell's farm,—“and of course it was a Plumstead fox,—there can be no doubt that Flurry is right about that;”—when the archdeacon spoke of this iniquity with much warmth, and told his son how he had at once written off to Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, and how Mr. Thorne had declared that he didn't believe a word of it, and how Flurry had produced the pad of the fox, with the marks of the trap on the skin,—then the son began to feel that the ground was becoming very warm, and that he could not go on much longer without rushing into details about Grace Crawley. “I've no more doubt that it was one of our foxes than that I stand here,” said the archdeacon.

“It doesn't matter where the fox was bred. It shouldn't have been trapped,” said the major.

“Of course not,” said the archdeacon, indignantly. I wonder whether he would have been so keen had a Romanist priest come into his parish, and turned one of his Protestants into a Papist?

Then Flurry came up, and produced the identical pad out of his pocket. “I don't suppose it was intended,” said the major, looking at the interesting relic with scrutinising eyes. “I suppose it was caught in a rabbit-trap,—eh, Flurry?”

“I don't see what right a man has with traps at all, when gentlemen is particular about their foxes,” said Flurry. “Of course they'd call it rabbits.”

“I never liked that man on Darvell's farm,” said the archdeacon.

“Nor I either,” said Flurry. “No farmer ought to be on that land who don't have a horse of his own. And if I war Squire Thorne, I wouldn't have no farmer there who didn't keep no horse. When a farmer has a horse of his own, and follies the hounds, there ain't no rabbit-traps;—never. How

does that come about, Mr. Henry? Rabbits! I know very well what rabbits is!"

Mr. Henry shook his head, and turned away, and the archdeacon followed him. There was an hypocrisy about this pretended care for the foxes which displeased the major. He could not, of course, tell his father that the foxes were no longer anything to him; but yet he must make it understood that such was his conviction. His mother had written to him, saying that the sale of furniture need not take place. It might be all very well for his mother to say that, or for his father; but, after what had taken place, he could consent to remain in England on no other understanding than that his income should be made permanent to him. Such permanence must not be any longer dependent on his father's caprice. In these days he had come to be somewhat in love with poverty and Pau, and had been feeding on the luxury of his grievance. There is, perhaps, nothing so pleasant as the preparation for self-sacrifice. To give up Cosby Lodge and the foxes, to marry a penniless wife, and go and live at Pau on six or seven hundred a year, seemed just now to Major Grantly to be a fine thing, and he did not intend to abandon this fine thing without receiving a very clear reason for doing so. "I can't quite understand Thorne," said the archdeacon. "He used to be so particular about the foxes, and I don't suppose that a country gentleman will change his ideas because he has given up hunting himself."

"Mr. Thorne never thought much of Flurry," said Henry Grantly, with his mind intent upon Pau and his grievance.

"He might take my word at any rate," said the archdeacon.

It was a known fact that the archdeacon's solicitude about the Plumstead covers was wholly on behalf of his son the major. The major himself knew this thoroughly, and felt that his father's present special anxiety was intended as a corroboration of the tidings conveyed in his mother's letter. Every word so uttered was meant to have reference to

his son's future residence in the country. "Father," he said, turning round shortly, and standing before the archdeacon in the pathway, "I think you are quite right about the covers. I feel sure that every gentleman who preserves a fox does good to the country. I am sorry that I shall not have a closer interest in the matter myself."

"Why shouldn't you have a closer interest in it?" said the archdeacon.

"Because I shall be living abroad."

"You got your mother's letter?"

"Yes; I got my mother's letter."

"Did she not tell you that you can stay where you are?"

"Yes, she said so. But, to tell you the truth, sir, I do not like the risk of living beyond my assured income."

"But if I justify it?"

"I do not wish to complain, sir, but you have made me understand that you can, and that in certain circumstances you will, at a moment, withdraw what you give me. Since this was said to me, I have felt myself to be unsafe in such a house as Cosby Lodge."

The archdeacon did not know how to explain. He had intended that the real explanation should be given by Mrs. Grantly, and had been anxious to return to his old relations with his son without any exact terms on his own part. But his son was, as he thought, awkward, and would drive him to some speech that was unnecessary. "You need not be unsafe there at all," he said, half angrily.

"I must be unsafe if I am not sure of my income."

"Your income is not in any danger. But you had better speak to your mother about it. For myself, I think I may say that I have never yet behaved to any of you with harshness. A son should, at any rate, not be offended because a father thinks that he is entitled to some consideration for what he does."

"There are some points on which a son cannot give way even to his father, sir."

"You had better speak to your mother, Henry. She will

explain to you what has taken place. Look at that plantation. You don't remember it, but every tree there was planted since you were born. I bought that farm from old Mr. Thorne, when he was purchasing St. Ewold's Downs, and it was the first bit of land I ever had of my own."

"That is not in Plumstead, I think?"

"No: this is Plumstead, where we stand, but that's in Eiderdown. The parishes run in and out here. I never bought any other land as cheap as I bought that."

"And did old Thorne make a good purchase of St. Ewold's?"

"Yes, I fancy he did. It gave him the whole of the parish, which was a great thing. It is astonishing how land has risen in value since that, and yet rents are not so very much higher. They who buy land now can't have above two-and-a-half for their money."

"I wonder people are so fond of land," said the major.

"It is a comfortable feeling to know that you stand on your own ground. Land is about the only thing that can't fly away. And then, you see, land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and influence and political power, to say nothing about the game. We'll go back now. I dare-say your mother will be at home by this time."

The archdeacon was striving to teach a great lesson to his son when he thus spoke of the pleasure which a man feels when he stands upon his own ground. He was bidding his son to understand how great was the position of an heir to a landed property, and how small the position of a man depending on what Dr. Grantly himself would have called a scratch income,—an income made up of a few odds and ends, a share or two in this company and a share or two in that, a slight venture in foreign stocks, a small mortgage and such like convenient but uninfluential driblets. A man, no doubt, may live at Pau on driblets; may pay his way and drink his bottle of cheap wine, and enjoy life after a fashion while reading Galignani and looking at the mountains. But,—as it seemed to the archdeacon,—when there was a

choice between this kind of thing, and fox-covers at Plumstead, and a seat among the magistrates of Barsetshire, and an establishment full of horses, beeves, swine, carriages, and hayricks, a man brought up as his son had been brought up ought not to be very long in choosing. It never entered into the archdeacon's mind that he was tempting his son; but Henty Grantly felt that he was having the good things of the world shown to him, and that he was being told that they should be his—for a consideration.

The major, in his present mood, looked at the matter from his own point of view, and determined that the consideration was too high. He was pledged not to give up Grace Crawley, and he would not yield on that point, though he might be tempted by all the fox-covers in Barsetshire. At this moment he did not know how far his father was prepared to yield, or how far it was expected that he should yield himself. He was told that he had to speak to his mother. He would speak to his mother, but, in the meantime, he could not bring himself to make a comfortable answer to his father's eloquent praise of landed property. He could not allow himself to be enthusiastic on the matter till he knew what was expected of him if he chose to submit to be made a British squire. At present Galignani and the mountains had their charms for him. There was, therefore, but little conversation between the father and the son as they walked back to the rectory.

Late that night the major heard the whole story from his mother. Gradually, and as though unintentionally, Mrs. Grantly told him all she knew of the archdeacon's visit to Framley. Mrs. Grantly was quite as anxious as was her husband to keep her son at home, and therefore she omitted in her story those little sneers against Grace which she herself had been tempted to make by the archdeacon's fervour in the girl's favour. The major said as little as was possible while he was being told of his father's adventure, and expressed neither anger nor satisfaction till he had been made thoroughly to understand that Grace had pledged herself

not to marry him as long as any suspicion should rest upon her father's name.

"Your father is quite satisfied with her," said Mrs. Grantly. "He thinks that she is behaving very well."

"My father had no right to exact such a pledge."

"But she made it of her own accord. She was the first to speak about Mr. Crawley's supposed guilt. Your father never mentioned it."

"He must have led to it; and I think he had no right to do so. He had no right to go to her at all."

"Now don't be foolish, Henry."

"I don't see that I am foolish."

"Yes, you are. A man is foolish if he won't take what he wants without asking exactly how he is to come by it. That your father should be anxious is the most natural thing in the world. You know how high he has always held his own head, and how much he thinks about the characters and position of clergymen. It is not surprising that he should dislike the idea of such a marriage."

"Grace Crawley would disgrace no family," said the lover.

"That's all very well for you to say, and I'll take your word that it is so;—that is as far as the young lady goes herself. And there's your father almost as much in love with her as you are. I don't know what you would have?"

"I would be left alone."

"But what harm has been done you? From what you yourself have told me, I know that Miss Crawley has said the same thing to you that she has said to your father. You can't but admire her for the feeling."

"I admire her for everything."

"Very well. We don't say anything against that."

"And I don't mean to give her up."

"Very well again. Let us hope that Mr. Crawley will be acquitted, and then all will be right. Your father never goes back from his promise. He is always better than his word. You'll find that if Mr. Crawley is acquitted, or if he escapes

in any way, your father will only be happy of an excuse to make much of the young lady. You should not be hard on him, Henry. Don't you see that it is his one great desire to keep you near to him? The sight of those odious bills nearly broke his heart."

"Then why did he threaten me?"

"Henry, you are obstinate."

"I am not obstinate, mother."

"Yes, you are. You remember nothing, and you forget nothing. You expect everything to be made smooth for you, and will do nothing towards making things smooth for anybody else. You ought to promise to give up the sale. If the worse came to the worst, your father would not let you suffer in pocket for yielding to him in so much."

"If the worst comes to the worst, I wish to take nothing from my father."

"You won't put off the sale, then?"

The son paused a moment before he answered his mother, thinking over all the circumstances of his position. "I cannot do so as long as I am subject to my father's threat," he said at last. "What took place between my father and Miss Crawley can go for nothing with me. He has told me that his allowance to me is to be withdrawn. Let him tell me that he has reconsidered the matter."

"But he has not withdrawn it. The last quarter was paid to your account only the other day. He does not mean to withdraw it."

"Let him tell me so; let him tell me that my power of living at Cosby Lodge does not depend on my marriage,—that my income will be continued to me whether I marry or no, and I'll arrange matters with the auctioneer to-morrow. You can't suppose that I should prefer to live in France."

"Henry, you are too hard on your father."

"I think, mother, he has been too hard upon me."

"It is you that are to blame now. I tell you plainly that that is my opinion. If evil comes of it, it will be your own fault."

"If evil come of it I must bear it."

"A son ought to give up something to his father;—especially to a father so indulgent as yours."

But it was of no use. And Mrs. Grantly when she went to her bed could only lament in her own mind over what, in discussing the matter afterwards with her sister, she called the cross-grainedness of men. "They are as like each other as two peas," she said, "and though each of them wished to be generous, neither of them would condescend to be just." Early on the following morning there was, no doubt, much said on the subject between the archdeacon and his wife before they met their son at breakfast; but neither at breakfast nor afterwards was there a word said between the father and son that had the slightest reference to the subject in dispute between them. The archdeacon made no more speeches in favour of land, nor did he revert to the foxes. He was very civil to his son;—too civil by half, as Mrs. Grantly continued to say to herself. And then the major drove himself away in his cart, going through Barchester, so that he might see his grandfather. When he wished his father good-by, the archdeacon shook hands with him, and said something about the chance of rain. Had he not better take the big umbrella? The major thanked him courteously, and said that he did not think it would rain. Then he was gone. "Upon his own head be it," said the archdeacon when his son's step was heard in the passage leading to the back-yard. Then Mrs. Grantly got up quietly and followed her son. She found him settling himself in his dog-cart, while the servant who was to accompany him was still at the horse's head. She went up close to him, and, standing by the wheel of the gig, whispered a word or two into his ear. "If you love me, Henry, you will postpone the sale. Do it for my sake." There came across his face a look of great pain, but he answered her not a word.

The archdeacon was walking about the room striking one hand open with the other closed, clearly in a tumult of anger, when his wife returned to him. "I have done all that

I can," he said,—"all that I can; more, indeed, than was becoming for me. Upon his own head be it. Upon his own head be it!"

"What is it that you fear?" she asked.

"I fear nothing. But if he chooses to sell his things at Cosby Lodge he must abide the consequences. They shall not be replaced with my money."

"What will it matter if he does sell them?"

"Matter! Do you think there is a single person in the county who will not know that his doing so is a sign that he has quarrelled with me?"

"But he has not quarrelled with you."

"I can tell you then, that in that case I shall have quarrelled with him! I have not been a hard father, but there are some things which a man cannot bear. Of course you will take his part."

"I am taking no part. I only want to see peace between you."

"Peace!—yes; peace indeed. I am to yield in everything. I am to be nobody. Look here;—as sure as ever an auctioneer's hammer is raised at Cosby Lodge, I will alter the settlement of the property. Every acre shall belong to Charles. There is my word for it." The poor woman had nothing more to say;—nothing more to say at that moment. She thought that at the present conjuncture her husband was less in the wrong than her son, but she could not tell him so lest she should strengthen him in his wrath.

Henry Grantly found his grandfather in bed, with Posy seated on the bed beside him. "My father told me that you were not quite well, and I thought that I would look in," said the major.

"Thank you, my dear;—it is very good of you. There is not much the matter with me, but I am not quite so strong as I was once." And the old man smiled as he held his grandson's hand.

"And how is cousin Posy?" said the major.

"Posy is quite well;—isn't she, my darling?" said the old man.

"Grandpa doesn't go to the cathedral now," said Posy; "so I come in to talk to him. Don't I, grandpa?"

"And to play cat's-cradle;—only we have not had any cat's-cradle this morning,—have we, Posy?"

"Mrs. Baxter told me not to play this morning, because it's cold for grandpa to sit up in bed," said Posy.

When the major had been there about twenty minutes he was preparing to take his leave,—but Mr. Harding, bidding Posy to go out of the room, told his grandson that he had a word to say to him. "I don't like to interfere, Henry," he said, "but I am afraid that things are not quite smooth at Plumstead."

"There is nothing wrong between me and my mother," said the major.

"God forbid that there should be; but, my dear boy, don't let there be anything wrong between you and your father. He is a good man, and the time will come when you will be proud of his memory."

"I am proud of him now."

"Then be gentle with him,—and submit yourself. I am an old man now,—very fast going away from all those I love here. But I am happy in leaving my children because they have ever been gentle to me and kind. If I am permitted to remember them whither I am going, my thoughts of them will all be pleasant. Should it not be much to them that they have made my death-bed happy?"

The major could not but tell himself that Mr. Harding had been a man easy to please, easy to satisfy, and, in that respect, very different from his father. But of course he said nothing of this. "I will do my best," he replied.

"Do, my boy. Honour thy father,—that thy days may be long in the land."

It seemed to the major as he drove away from Barchester that everybody was against him; and yet he was sure that he himself was right. He could not give up Grace Crawley; and unless he were to do so he could not live at Cosby Lodge.

CHAPTER LIX

A Lady presents her Compliments to Miss L. D.

ONE morning, while Lily Dale was staying with Mrs. Thorne in London, there was brought up to her room, as she was dressing for dinner, a letter which the postman had just left for her. The address was written with a feminine hand, and Lily was at once aware that she did not know the writing. The angles were very acute, and the lines were very straight, and the vowels looked to be cruel and false, with their sharp points and their open eyes. Lily at once knew that it was the performance of a woman who had been taught to write at school, and not at home, and she became prejudiced against the writer before she opened the letter. When she had opened the letter and read it, her feelings towards the writer were not of a kindly nature. It was as follows:—

“A lady presents her compliments to Miss L. D., and earnestly implores Miss L. D. to give her an answer to the following question. Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E.? The lady in question pledges herself not to interfere with Miss L. D. in any way, should the answer be in the affirmative. The lady earnestly requests that a reply to this question may be sent to M. D., Post-office, 455 Edgware Road. In order that L. D. may not doubt that M. D. has an interest in J. E., M. D. encloses the last note she received from him before he started for the Continent.” Then there was a scrap, which Lily well knew to be in the handwriting of John Eames, and the scrap was as follows:—“Dearest M.—Punctually at 8.30. Ever and always your unalterable J. E.” Lily, as she read this, did not comprehend that John’s note to M. D. had been in itself a joke.

Lily Dale had heard of anonymous letters before, but had never received one, or even seen one. Now that she had one in her hand, it seemed to her that there could be nothing more abominable than the writing of such a letter. She let it drop from her, as though the receiving, and opening,

and reading it had been a stain to her. As it lay on the ground at her feet, she trod upon it. Of what sort could a woman be who would write such a letter as that? Answer it! Of course she would not answer it. It never occurred to her for a moment that it could become her to answer it. Had she been at home or with her mother, she would have called her mother to her, and Mrs. Dale would have taken it from the ground, and have read it, and then destroyed it. As it was, she must pick it up herself. She did so, and declared to herself that there should be an end to it. It might be right that somebody should see it, and therefore she would show it to Emily Dunstable. After that it should be destroyed.

Of course the letter could have no effect upon her. So she told herself. But it did have a very strong effect, and probably the exact effect which the writer had intended that it should have. J. E. was, of course, John Eames. There was no doubt about that. What a fool the writer must have been to talk of L. D. in the letter, when the outside cover was plainly addressed to Miss Lilian Dale! But there are some people for whom the pretended mystery of initial letters has a charm, and who love the darkness of anonymous letters. As Lily thought of this, she stamped on the letter again. Who was the M. D. to whom she was required to send an answer—with whom John Eames corresponded in the most affectionate terms? She had resolved that she would not even ask herself a question about M. D., and yet she could not divert her mind from the inquiry. It was, at any rate, a fact that there must be some woman designated by the letters,—some woman who had, at any rate, chosen to call herself M. D. And John Eames had called her M. There must, at any rate, be such a woman. This female, be she who she might, had thought it worth her while to make this inquiry about John Eames, and had manifestly learned something of Lily's own history. And the woman had pledged herself not to interfere with John Eames, if L. D. would only condescend to say that she was engaged to him! As Lily thought of the proposition, she trod upon the letter

for the third time. Then she picked it up, and having no place of custody under lock and key ready to her hand, she put it in her pocket.

At night, before she went to bed, she showed the letter to Emily Dunstable. "Is it not surprising that any woman could bring herself to write such a letter?" said Lily.

But Miss Dunstable hardly saw it in the same light. "If anybody were to write me such a letter about Bernard," said she, "I should show it to him as a good joke."

"That would be very different. You and Bernard, of course, understand each other."

"And so will you and Mr. Eames—some day, I hope."

"Never more than we do now, dear. The thing that annoys me is that such a woman as that should have even heard my name at all."

"As long as people have got ears and tongues, people will hear other people's names."

Lily paused a moment, and then spoke again, asking another question. "I suppose this woman does know him? She must know him, because he has written to her."

"She knows something about him, no doubt, and has some reason for wishing that you should quarrel with him. If I were you, I should take care not to gratify her. As for Mr. Eames's note, it is a joke."

"It is nothing to me," said Lily.

"I suppose," continued Emily, "that most gentlemen become acquainted with some people that they would not wish all their friends to know that they knew. They go about so much more than we do, and meet people of all sorts."

"No gentleman should become intimately acquainted with a woman who could write such a letter as that," said Lily. And as she spoke she remembered a certain episode to John Eames's early life, which had reached her from a source which she had not doubted, and which had given her pain and offended her. She had believed that John Eames had in that case behaved cruelly to a young woman, and

had thought that her offence had come simply from that feeling. "But of course it is nothing to me," she said. "Mr. Eames can choose his friends as he likes. I only wish that my name might not be mentioned to them."

"It is not from him that she has heard it."

"Perhaps not. As I said before, of course it does not signify; only there is something very disagreeable in the whole thing. The idea is so hateful! Of course this woman means me to understand that she considers herself to have a claim upon Mr. Eames, and that I stand in her way."

"And why should you not stand in her way?"

"I will stand in nobody's way. Mr. Eames has a right to give his hand to any one that he pleases. I, at any rate, can have no cause of offence against him. The only thing is that I do wish that my name could be left alone." Lily, when she was in her own room again, did destroy the letter; but before she did so she read it again, and it became so indelibly impressed on her memory that she could not forget even the words of it. The lady who wrote had pledged herself, under certain conditions, "not to interfere with Miss L. D." "Interfere with me!" Lily said to herself; "nobody can interfere with me; nobody has power to do so." As she turned it over in her mind, her heart became hard against John Eames. No woman would have troubled herself to write such a letter without some cause for the writing. That the writer was vulgar, false, and unfeminine, Lily thought that she could perceive from the letter itself; but no doubt the woman knew John Eames had some interest in the question of his marriage, and was entitled to some answer to her question;—only was not entitled to such answer from Lily Dale.

For some weeks past now, up to the hour at which this anonymous letter had reached her hands, Lily's heart had been growing soft and still softer towards John Eames; and now again it had become hardened. I think that the appearance of Adolphus Crosbie in the park, that momentary vision of the real man by which the divinity of the imagin-

ary Apollo had been dashed to the ground, had done a service to the cause of the other lover; of the lover who had never been a god, but who of late years had at any rate grown into the full dimensions of a man. Unfortunately for the latter, he had commenced his love-making when he was but little more than a boy. Lily, as she had thought of the two together, in the days of her solitude, after she had been deserted by Crosbie, had ever pictured to herself the lover whom she had preferred as having something godlike in his favour, as being far the superior in wit, in manner, in acquirement, and in personal advantage. There had been good nature and true hearty love on the side of the other man; but circumstances had seemed to show that his good-nature was equal to all, and that he was able to share even his hearty love among two or three. A man of such a character, known by a girl from his boyhood as John Eames had been known by Lily Dale, was likely to find more favour as a friend than as a lover. So it had been between John Eames and Lily. While the untrue memory of what Crosbie was, or ever had been, was present to her, she could hardly bring herself to accept in her mind the idea of a lover who was less noble in his manhood than the false picture which that untrue memory was ever painting for her. Then had come before her eyes the actual man; and though he had been seen but for a moment, the false image had been broken into shivers. Lily had discovered that she had been deceived, and that her forgiveness had been asked, not by a god, but by an ordinary human being. As regarded the ungodlike man himself, this could make no difference. Having thought upon the matter deeply, she had resolved that she would not marry Mr. Crosbie, and had pledged herself to that effect to friends who never could have brought themselves to feel affection for him, even had she married him. But the shattering of the false image might have done John Eames a good turn. Lily knew that she had at any rate full permission from all her friends to throw in her lot with his, —if she could persuade herself to do so. Mother, uncle,

sister, brother-in-law, cousin,—and now this new cousin's bride that was to be,—together with Lady Julia and a whole crowd of Allington and Guestwick friends, were in favour of such a marriage. There had been nothing against it but the fact that the other man had been dearer to her; and that other fact that poor Johnny lacked something,—something of earnestness, something of manliness, something of that Phæbus divinity with which Crosbie had contrived to invest his own image. But, as I have said above, John had gradually grown, if not into divinity, at least into manliness; and the shattering of the false image had done him yeoman's service. Now had come this accursed letter, and Lily, despite herself, despite her better judgment, could not sweep it away from her mind and make the letter as nothing to her. M. D. had promised not to interfere with her! There was no room for such interference, no possibility that such interference should take place. She hoped earnestly,—so she told herself,—that her old friend John Eames might have nothing to do with a woman so impudent and vulgar as must be this M. D.; but except as regarded old friendship, M. D. and John Eames, apart or together, could be as nothing to her. Therefore, I say that the letter had had the effect which the writer of it had desired.

All London was new to Lily Dale, and Mrs. Thorne was very anxious to show her everything that could be seen. She was to return to Allington before the flowers of May would have come, and the crowd and the glare and the fashion and the art of the Academy's great exhibition must therefore remain unknown to her; but she was taken to see many pictures, and among others she was taken to see the pictures belonging to a certain nobleman who, with that munificence which is so amply enjoyed and so little recognized in England, keeps open house for the world to see the treasures which the wealth of his family has collected. The necessary order was procured, and on a certain brilliant April afternoon Mrs. Thorne and her party found themselves in this nobleman's drawing-room. Lily was with her,

of course, and Emily Dunstable was there, and Bernard Dale, and Mrs. Thorne's dear friend Mrs. Harold Smith, and Mrs. Thorne's constant and useful attendant, Siph Dunn. They had nearly completed their delightful but wearying task of gazing at pictures, and Mrs. Harold Smith had declared that she would not look at another painting till the exhibition was open; three of the ladies were seated in the drawing-room, and Siph Dunn was standing before them, lecturing about art as though he had been brought up on the ancient masters; Emily and Bernard were lingering behind, and the others were simply delaying their departure till the truant lovers should have caught them. At this moment two gentlemen entered the room from the gallery, and the two gentlemen were Fowler Pratt and Adolphus Crosbie.

All the party except Mrs. Thorne knew Crosbie personally, and all of them except Mrs. Harold Smith knew something of the story of what had occurred between Crosbie and Lily. Siph Dunn had learned it all since the meeting in the Park, having nearly learned it all from what he had seen there with his eyes. But Mrs. Thorne, who knew Lily's story, did not know Crosbie's appearance. But there was his friend Fowler Pratt, who, as will be remembered, had dined with her but the other day; and she, with that outspoken and somewhat loud impulse which was natural to her, addressed him at once across the room, calling him by name. Had she not done so, the two men might probably have escaped through the room, in which case they would have met Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable in the doorway. Fowler Pratt would have endeavoured so to escape, and to carry Crosbie with him, as he was quite alive to the expedience of saving Lily from such a meeting. But, as things turned out, escape from Mrs. Thorne was impossible.

"There's Fowler Pratt," she had said when they first entered, quite loud enough for Fowler Pratt to hear her. "Mr. Pratt, come here. How d'ye do? You dined with me last Tuesday, and you've never been to call."

"I never recognize that obligation till after the middle of May," said Mr. Pratt, shaking hands with Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and bowing to Miss Dale.

"I don't see the justice of that at all," said Mrs. Thorne. "It seems to me that a good dinner is as much entitled to a morsel of pasteboard in April as at any other time. You won't have another till you have called,—unless you're specially wanted."

Crosbie would have gone on, but that in his attempt to do so he passed close by the chair on which Mrs. Harold Smith was sitting, and that he was accosted by her. "Mr. Crosbie," she said, "I haven't seen you for an age. Has it come to pass that you have buried yourself entirely?" He did not know how to extricate himself so as to move on at once. He paused, and hesitated, and then stopped, and made an attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith as though he were at his ease. The attempt was anything but successful; but having once stopped, he did not know how to put himself in motion again, so that he might escape. At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable came up and joined the group; but neither of them had discovered who Crosbie was till they were close upon him.

Lily was seated between Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and Siph Dunn had been standing immediately opposite to them. Fowler Pratt, who had been drawn into the circle against his will, was now standing close to Dunn, almost between him and Lily,—and Crosbie was standing within two yards of Lily, on the other side of Dunn. Emily and Bernard had gone behind Pratt and Crosbie to Mrs. Thorne's side before they had recognized the two men;—and in this way Lily was completely surrounded. Mrs. Thorne, who, in spite of her eager, impetuous ways, was as thoughtful of others as any woman could be, as soon as she heard Crosbie's name understood it all, and knew that it would be well that she should withdraw Lily from her plight. Crosbie, in his attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith, had smiled and simpered,—and had then felt that to smile and simper before Lily

Dale, with a pretended indifference to her presence, was false on his part, and would seem to be mean. He would have avoided Lily for both their sakes, had it been possible; but it was no longer possible, and he could not keep his eyes from her face. Hardly knowing what he did, he bowed to her, lifted his hat, and uttered some word of greeting.

Lily, from the moment that she had perceived his presence, had looked straight before her, with something almost of fierceness in her eyes. Both Pratt and Siph Dunn had observed her narrowly. It had seemed as though Crosbie had been altogether outside the ken of her eyes, or the notice of her ears, and yet she had seen every motion of his body, and had heard every word which had fallen from his lips. Now, when he saluted her, she turned her face full upon him, and bowed to him. Then she rose from her seat, and made her way, between Siph Dunn and Pratt, out of the circle. The blood had mounted to her face and suffused it all, and her whole manner was such that it could escape the observation of none who stood there. Even Mrs. Harold Smith had seen it, and had read the story. As soon as she was on her feet, Bernard had dropped Emily's hand, and offered his arm to his cousin. "Lily," he had said out loud, "you had better let me take you away. It is a misfortune that you have been subjected to the insult of such a greeting." Bernard and Crosbie had been early friends, and Bernard had been the unfortunate means of bringing Crosbie and Lily together. Up to this day, Bernard had never had his revenge for the ill-treatment which his cousin had received. Some morsel of that revenge came to him now. Lily almost hated her cousin for what he said; but she took his arm, and walked with him from the room. It must be acknowledged in excuse for Bernard Dale, and as an apology for the apparent indiscretion of his words, that all the circumstances of the meeting had become apparent to every one there. This misfortune of the encounter had become too plain to admit of its being hidden under any of the ordinary veils of society. Crosbie's salutation had been made before the eyes of them

all, and in the midst of absolute silence, and Lily had risen with so queen-like a demeanour, and had moved with so stately a step, that it was impossible that any one concerned should pretend to ignore the facts of the scene that had occurred. Crosbie was still standing close to Mrs. Harold Smith, Mrs. Thorne had risen from her seat, and the words which Bernard Dale had uttered were still sounding in the ears of them all. "Shall I see after the carriage?" said Siph Dunn. "Do," said Mrs. Thorne; "or, stay a moment; the carriage will of course be there, and we will go together. Good-morning, Mr. Pratt. I expect that, at any rate, you will send me your card by post." Then they all passed on, and Crosbie and Fowler Pratt were left among the pictures.

"I think you will agree with me now that you had better give her up," said Fowler Pratt.

"I will never give her up," said Crosbie, "till I shall hear that she has married some one else."

"You may take my word for it, that she will never marry you after what has just now occurred."

"Very likely not; but still the attempt, even the idea of the attempt, will be a comfort to me. I shall be endeavouring to do that which I ought to have done."

"What you have got to think of, I should suppose, is her comfort,—not your own."

Crosbie stood for a while silent, looking at a portrait which was hung just within the doorway of a smaller room into which they had passed, as though his attention were entirely riveted by the picture. But he was thinking of the picture not at all, and did not even know what kind of painting was on the canvas before him.

"Pratt," he said at last, "you are always hard to me."

"I will say nothing more to you on the subject, if you wish me to be silent."

"I do wish you to be silent about that."

"That shall be enough," said Pratt.

"You do not quite understand me. You do not know how thoroughly I have repented of the evil that I have

done, or how far I would go to make retribution, if retribution were possible!"

Fowler Pratt, having been told to hold his tongue as regarded that subject, made no reply to this, and began to talk about the pictures.

Lily, leaning on her cousin's arm, was out in the courtyard in front of the house before Mrs. Thorne or Siph Dunn. It was but for a minute, but still there was a minute in which Bernard felt that he ought to say a word to her.

"I hope you are not angry with me, Lily, for having spoken."

"I wish, of course, that you had not spoken; but I am not angry. I have no right to be angry. I made the misfortune for myself. Do not say anything more about it, dear Bernard;—that is all."

They had walked to the picture-gallery; but, by agreement, two carriages had come to take them away,—Mrs. Thorne's and Mrs. Harold Smith's. Mrs. Thorne easily managed to send Emily Dunstable and Bernard away with her friend, and to tell Siph Dunn that he must manage for himself. In this way it was contrived that no one but Mrs. Thorne should be with Lily Dale.

"My dear," said Mrs. Thorne, "it seemed to me that you were a little put out, and so I thought it best to send them all away."

"It was very kind."

"He ought to have passed on and not to have stood an instant when he saw you," said Mrs. Thorne, with indignation. "There are moments when it is a man's duty simply to vanish, to melt into the air, or to sink into the ground,—in which he is bound to overcome the difficulties of such sudden self-removal, or must ever after be accounted poor and mean."

"I did not want him to vanish;—if only he had not spoken to me."

"He should have vanished. A man is sometimes bound in honour to do so, even when he himself has done nothing

wrong;—when the sin has been all with the woman. Her femininity has still a right to expect that so much shall be done in its behalf. But when the sin has been all his own, as it was in this case,—and such damning sin too,—”

“Pray do not go on, Mrs. Thorne.”

“He ought to go out and hang himself simply for having allowed himself to be seen. I thought Bernard behaved very well, and I shall tell him so.”

“I wish you could manage to forget it all, and say no word more about it.”

“I won’t trouble you with it, my dear; I will promise you that. But, Lily, I can hardly understand you. This man who must have been and must ever be a brute,—”

“Mrs. Thorne, you promised me this instant that you would not talk of him.”

“After this I will not; but you must let me have my way now for one moment. I have so often longed to speak to you, but have not done so from fear of offending you. Now the matter has come up by chance, and it was impossible that what has occurred should pass by without a word. I cannot conceive why the memory of that bad man should be allowed to destroy your whole life.”

“My life is not destroyed. My life is anything but destroyed. It is a very happy life.”

“But, my dear, if all that I hear is true, there is a most estimable young man, whom everybody likes, and particularly all your own family, and whom you like very much yourself; and you will have nothing to say to him, though his constancy is like the constancy of an old Paladin,—and all because of this wretch who just now came in your way.”

“Mrs. Thorne, it is impossible to explain it all.”

“I do not want you to explain it all. Of course I would not ask any young woman to marry a man whom she did not love. Such marriages are abominable to me. But I think that a young woman ought to get married if the thing fairly comes in her way, and if her friends approve, and if she is fond of the man who is fond of her. It may be that some

memory of what has gone before is allowed to stand in your way, and that it should not be so allowed. It sometimes happens that a morbid sentiment will destroy a life. Excuse me, then, Lily, if I say too much to you in my hope that you may not suffer after this fashion."

"I know how kind you are, Mrs. Thorne."

"Here we are at home, and perhaps you would like to go in. I have some calls which I must make." Then the conversation was ended, and Lily was alone.

As if she had not thought of it all before! As if there was anything new in this counsel which Mrs. Thorne had given her! She had received the same advice from her mother, from her sister, from her uncle, and from Lady Julia, till she was sick of it. How had it come to pass that matters which with others are so private, should with her have become the public property of so large a circle? Any other girl would receive advice on such a subject from her mother alone, and there the secret would rest. But her secret had been published, as it were, by the town-crier in the High Street! Everybody knew that she had been jilted by Adolphus Crosbie, and that it was intended that she should be consoled by John Eames. And people seemed to think that they had a right to rebuke her if she expressed an unwillingness to carry out this intention which the public had so kindly arranged for her.

Morbid sentiment! Why should she be accused of morbid sentiment because she was unable to transfer her affections to the man who had been fixed on as her future husband by the large circle of acquaintance who had interested themselves in her affairs? There was nothing morbid in either her desires or her regrets. So she assured herself, with something very like anger at the accusation made against her. She had been contented, and was contented, to live at home as her mother lived, asking for no excitement beyond that given by the daily routine of her duties. There could be nothing morbid in that. She would go back to Allington as soon as might be, and have done with this London life,

which only made her wretched. This seeing of Crosbie had been terrible to her. She did not tell herself that his image had been shattered. Her idea was that all her misery had come from the untowardness of the meeting. But there was the fact that she had seen the man and heard his voice, and that the seeing him and hearing him had made her miserable. She certainly desired that it might never be her lot either to see him or to hear him again.

And as for John Eames,—in those bitter moments of her reflection she almost wished the same in regard to him. If he would only cease to be her lover, he might be very well; but he was not very well to her as long as his pretensions were dinned into her ear by everybody who knew her. And then she told herself that John would have had a better chance if he had been content to plead for himself. In this, I think, she was hard upon her lover. He had pleaded for himself as well as he knew how, and as often as the occasion had been given to him. It had hardly been his fault that his case had been taken in hand by other advocates. He had given no commission to Mrs. Thorne to plead for him.

Poor Johnny. He had stood in much better favour before the lady had presented her compliments to Miss L. D. It was that odious letter, and the thoughts which it had forced upon Lily's mind, which were now most inimical to his interests. Whether Lily loved him or not, she did not love him well enough not to be jealous of him. Had any such letter reached her respecting Crosbie in the happy days of her young love, she would simply have laughed at it. It would have been nothing to her. But now she was sore and unhappy, and any trifle was powerful enough to irritate her. "Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E.?" "No," said Lily, out loud. "Lily Dale is not engaged to marry John Eames, and never will be so engaged." She was almost tempted to sit down and write the required answer to Miss M. D. Though the letter had been destroyed, she well remembered the number of the post-office in the Edgware Road. Poor John Eames.

That evening she told Emily Dunstable that she thought she would like to return to Allington before the day that had been appointed for her. "But why," said Emily, "should you be worse than your word?"

"I daresay it will seem silly, but the fact is I am homesick. I'm not accustomed to be away from mamma for so long."

"I hope it is not what occurred to-day at the picture-gallery."

"I won't deny that it is that in part."

"That was a strange accident, you know, that might never occur again."

"It has occurred twice already, Emily."

"I don't call the affair in the Park anything. Anybody may see anybody else in the Park, of course. He was not brought so near you that he could annoy you there. You ought certainly to wait till Mr. Eames has come back from Italy."

Then Lily declared that she must and would go back to Allington on the next Monday, and she actually did write a letter to her mother that night to say that such was her intention. But on the morrow her heart was less sore, and the letter was not sent.

CHAPTER LX

The End of Jael and Sisera

THERE was to be one more sitting for the picture, as the reader will remember, and the day for that sitting had arrived. Conway Dalrymple had in the meantime called at Mrs. Van Siever's house, hoping that he might be able to see Clara, and make his offer to her there. But he had failed in his attempt to reach her. He had found it impossible to say all that he had to say in the painting-room, during the very short intervals which Mrs. Broughton left to him. A man should be allowed to be alone more than fifteen minutes with a young lady on the occasion in which he offers to her his hand and his heart; but hitherto he had never had more than fifteen minutes at his command; and then there had been the turban! He had also in the meantime called on Mrs. Broughton, with the intention of explaining to her that if she really intended to favour his views in respect to Miss Van Siever, she ought to give him a little more liberty for expressing himself. On this occasion he had seen his friend, but had not been able to go as minutely as he had wished into the matter that was so important to himself. Mrs. Broughton had found it necessary during this meeting to talk almost exclusively about herself and her own affairs. "Conway," she had said, directly she saw him, "I am so glad you have come. I think I should have gone mad if I had not seen some one who cares for me." This was early in the morning, not much after eleven, and Mrs. Broughton, hearing first his knock at the door, and then his voice, had met him in the hall and taken him into the dining-room.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, Conway!"

"What is it? Has anything gone wrong with Dobbs?"

"Everything has gone wrong with him. He is ruined."

"Heaven and earth! What do you mean?"

"Simply what I say. But you must not speak a word of it. I do not know it from himself."

"How do you know it?"

"Wait a moment. Sit down there, will you?—and I will sit by you. No, Conway; do not take my hand. It is not right. There;—so. Yesterday Mrs. Van Siever was here. I need not tell you all that she said to me, even if I could. She was very harsh and cruel, saying all manner of things about Dobbs. How can I help it, if he drinks? I have not encouraged him. And as for expensive living, I have been as ignorant as a child. I have never asked for anything. When we were married somebody told me how much we should have to spend. It was either two thousand, or three thousand, or four thousand, or something like that. You know, Conway, how ignorant I am about money;—that I am like a child. Is it not true?" She waited for an answer and Dalrymple was obliged to acknowledge that it was true. And yet he had known the times in which his dear friend had been very sharp in her memory with reference to a few pounds. "And now she says that Dobbs owes her money which he cannot pay her, and that everything must be sold. She says that Musselboro must have the business, and that Dobbs must shift for himself elsewhere."

"Do you believe that she has the power to decide that things shall go this way or that,—as she pleases?"

"How am I to know? She says so, and she says it is because he drinks. He does drink. That at least is true; but how can I help it? Oh, Conway, what am I to do? Dobbs did not come home at all last night, but sent for his things,—saying that he must stay in the City. What am I to do if they come and take the house, and sell the furniture, and turn me out into the street?" Then the poor creature began to cry in earnest, and Dalrymple had to console her as best he might. "How I wish I had known you first," she said. To this Dalrymple was able to make no direct answer. He was wise enough to know that a direct answer might possibly lead him into terrible trouble. He was by no means anxious

to find himself “protecting” Mrs. Dobbs Broughton from the ruin which her husband had brought upon her.

Before he left her she had told him a long story, partly of matters of which he had known something before, and partly made up of that which she had heard from the old woman. It was settled, Mrs. Broughton said, that Mr. Musselboro was to marry Clara Van Siever. But it appeared, as far as Dalrymple could learn, that this was a settlement made simply between Mrs. Van Siever and Musselboro. Clara, as he thought, was not a girl likely to fall into such a settlement without having an opinion of her own. Musselboro was to have the business, and Dobbs Broughton was to be “sold up,” and then look for employment in the City. From her husband the wife had not heard a word on this matter, and the above story was simply what had been told to Mrs. Broughton by Mrs. Van Siever. “For myself it seems that there can be but one fate,” said Mrs. Broughton. Dalrymple, in his tenderest voice, asked what that one fate must be. “Never mind,” said Mrs. Broughton. “There are some things which one cannot tell even to such a friend as you.” He was sitting near her and had all but got his arm behind her waist. He was, however, able to be prudent. “Maria,” he said, getting up on his feet, “if it should really come about that you should want anything, you will send to me. You will promise me that, at any rate?” She rubbed a tear from her eye and said that she did not know. “There are moments in which a man must speak plainly,” said Conway Dalrymple;—“in which it would be unmanly not to do so, however prosaic it may seem. I need hardly tell you that my purse shall be yours if you want it.” But just at that moment she did not want his purse, nor must it be supposed that she wanted to run away with him and to leave her husband to fight the battle alone with Mrs. Van Siever. The truth was that she did not know what she wanted, over and beyond an assurance from Conway Dalrymple that she was the most ill-used, the most interesting, and the most beautiful woman ever heard of, either in history or romance. Had

he proposed to her to pack up a bundle and go off with him in a cab to the London, Chatham, and Dover railway station, en route for Boulogne, I do not for a moment think that she would have packed up her bundle. She would have received intense gratification from the offer,—so much so that she would have been almost consoled for her husband's ruin; but she would have scolded her lover, and would have explained to him the great iniquity of which he was guilty.

It was clear to him that at this present time he could not make any special terms with her as to Clara Van Siever. At such a moment as this he could hardly ask her to keep out of the way, in order that he might have his opportunity. But when he suggested that probably it might be better, in the present emergency, to give up the idea of any further sitting in her room, and proposed to send for his canvas, colour-box, and easel, she told him that, as far as she was concerned, he was welcome to have that one other sitting for which they had all bargained. "You had better come to-morrow, as we had agreed," she said; "and unless I shall have been turned out into the street by the creditors, you may have the room as you did before. And you must remember, Conway, that though Mrs. Van says that Musselboro is to have Clara, it doesn't follow that Clara should give way." When we consider everything, we must acknowledge that this was, at any rate, good-natured. Then there was a tender parting, with many tears, and Conway Dalrymple escaped from the house.

He did not for a moment doubt the truth of the story which Mrs. Broughton had told, as far, at least, as it referred to the ruin of Dobbs Broughton. He had heard something of this before, and for some weeks had expected that a crash was coming. Broughton's rise had been very sudden, and Dalrymple had never regarded his friend as firmly placed in the commercial world. Dobbs was one of those men who seem born to surprise the world by a spurt of prosperity, and might, perhaps, have had a second spurt,

or even a third, could he have kept himself from drinking in the morning. But Dalrymple, though he was hardly astonished by the story, as it regarded Broughton, was put out by that part of it which had reference to Musselboro. He had known that Musselboro had been introduced to Broughton by Mrs. Van Siever, but, nevertheless, he had regarded the man as being no more than Broughton's clerk. And now he was told that Musselboro was to marry Clara Van Siever, and have all Mrs. Van Siever's money. He resolved, at last, that he would run his risk about the money, and take Clara either with or without it, if she would have him. And as for that difficulty in asking her, if Mrs. Broughton would give him no opportunity of putting the question behind her back, he would put it before her face. He had not much leisure for consideration on these points, as the next day was the day for the last sitting.

On the following morning he found Miss Van Siever already seated in Mrs. Broughton's room when he reached it. And at the moment Mrs. Broughton was not there. As he took Clara's hand, he could not prevent himself from asking her whether she had heard anything? "Heard what?" said Clara. "Then you have not," said he. "Never mind now, as Mrs. Broughton is here." Then Mrs. Broughton had entered the room. She seemed to be quite cheerful, but Dalrymple perfectly understood, from a special glance which she gave to him, that he was to perceive that her cheerfulness was assumed for Clara's benefit. Mrs. Broughton was showing how great a heroine she could be on behalf of her friends. "Now, my dear," she said, "do remember that this is the last day. It may be all very well, Conway, and, of course, you know best; but as far as I can see, you have not made half as much progress as you ought to have done." "We shall do excellently well," said Dalrymple. "So much the better," said Mrs. Broughton; "and now, Clara, I'll place you." And so Clara was placed on her knees, with the turban on her head.

Dalrymple began his work assiduously, knowing that

Mrs. Broughton would not leave the room for some minutes. It was certain that she would remain for a quarter of an hour, and it might be as well that he should really use that time on his picture. The peculiar position in which he was placed probably made his work difficult to him. There was something perplexing in the necessity which bound him to look upon the young lady before him both as Jael and as the future Mrs. Conway Dalrymple, knowing as he did that she was at present simply Clara Van Siever. A double personification was not difficult to him. He had encountered it with every model that had sat to him, and with every young lady he had attempted to win,—if he had ever made such an attempt with one before. But the triple character, joined to the necessity of the double work, was distressing to him. “The hand a little further back, if you don’t mind,” he said, “and the wrist more turned towards me. That is just it. Lean a little more over him. There—that will do exactly.” If Mrs. Broughton did not go very quickly, he must begin to address his model on a totally different subject, even while she was in the act of slaying Sisera.

“Have you made up your mind who is to be Sisera?” asked Mrs. Broughton.

“I think I shall put in my own face,” said Dalrymple; “if Miss Van Siever does not object.”

“Not in the least,” said Clara, speaking without moving her face—almost without moving her lips.

“That will be excellent,” said Mrs. Broughton. She was still quite cheerful, and really laughed as she spoke. “Shall you like the idea, Clara, of striking the nail right through his head?”

“Oh, yes; as well his head as another’s. I shall seem to be having my revenge for all the trouble he has given me.”

There was a slight pause, and then Dalrymple spoke. “You have had that already, in striking me right through the heart.”

“What a very pretty speech! Was it not, my dear?” said Mrs. Broughton. And then Mrs. Broughton laughed. There

was something slightly hysterical in her laugh which grated on Dalrymple's ears,—something which seemed to tell him that at the present moment his dear friend was not going to assist him honestly in his effort.

“Only that I should put him out, I would get up and make a curtsey,” said Clara. No young lady could ever talk of making a curtsey for such a speech if she supposed it to have been made in earnestness. And Clara, no doubt, understood that a man might make a hundred such speeches in the presence of a third person without any danger that they would be taken as meaning anything. All this Dalrymple knew, and began to think that he had better put down his palette and brush, and do the work which he had before him in the most prosaic language that he could use. He could, at any rate, succeed in making Clara acknowledge his intention in this way. He waited still for a minute or two, and it seemed to him that Mrs. Broughton had no intention of piling her fagots on the present occasion. It might be that the remembrance of her husband's ruin prevented her from sacrificing herself in the other direction also.

“I am not very good at pretty speeches, but I am good at telling the truth,” said Dalrymple.

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Mrs. Broughton, still with a touch of hysterical action in her throat. “Upon my word, Conway, you know how to praise yourself.”

“He dispraises himself most unnecessarily in denying the prettiness of his language,” said Clara. As she spoke she hardly moved her lips, and Dalrymple went on painting from the model. It was clear that Miss Van Siever understood that the painting, and not the pretty speeches, was the important business on hand.

Mrs. Broughton had now tucked her feet up on the sofa, and was gazing at the artist as he stood at his work. Dalrymple, remembering how he had offered her his purse,—an offer which, in the existing crisis of her affairs, might mean a great deal,—felt that she was ill-natured. Had she intended to do him a good turn, she would have gone now;

but there she lay, with her feet tucked up, clearly purposing to be present through the whole of that morning's sitting. His anger against her added something to his spirit, and made him determine that he would carry out his purpose. Suddenly, therefore, he prepared himself for action.

He was in the habit of working with a Turkish cap on his head, and with a short apron tied round him. There was something picturesque about the cap, which might not have been incongruous with love-making. It is easy to suppose that Juan wore a Turkish cap when he sat with Haidee in Lambro's island. But we may be quite sure that he did not wear an apron. Now Dalrymple had thought of all this, and had made up his mind to work to-day without his apron; but when arranging his easel and his brushes, he had put it on from force of habit, and was now disgusted with himself as he remembered it. He put down his brush, divested his thumb of his palette, then took off his cap, and after that untied the apron.

"Conway, what are you going to do?" said Mrs. Broughton.

"I am going to ask Clara Van Siever to be my wife," said Dalrymple. At that moment the door was opened, and Mrs. Van Siever entered the room.

Clara had not risen from her kneeling posture when Dalrymple began to put off his trappings. She had not seen what he was doing as plainly as Mrs. Broughton had done, having her attention naturally drawn towards her Sisera; and, besides this, she understood that she was to remain as she was placed till orders to move were given to her. Dalrymple would occasionally step aside from his easel to look at her in some altered light, and on such occasions she would simply hold her hammer somewhat more tightly than before. When, therefore, Mrs. Van Siever entered the room Clara was still slaying Sisera, in spite of the artist's speech. The speech, indeed, and her mother both seemed to come to her at the same time. The old woman stood for a moment holding the open door in her hand. "You fool!" she

said, "what are you doing there, dressed up in that way like a guy?" Then Clara got up from her feet and stood before her mother in Jael's dress and Jael's turban. Dalrymple thought that the dress and turban did not become her badly. Mrs. Van Siever apparently thought otherwise. "Will you have the goodness to tell me, miss, why you are dressed up after that Mad Bess of Bedlam fashion?"

The reader will no doubt bear in mind that Clara had other words of which to think besides those which were addressed to her by her mother. Dalrymple had asked her to be his wife in the plainest possible language, and she thought that the very plainness of the language became him well. The very taking off of his apron, almost as he said the words, though to himself the action had been so distressing as almost to overcome his purpose, had in it something to her of direct simple determination which pleased her. When he had spoken of having had a nail driven by her right through his heart, she had not been in the least gratified; but the taking off of the apron, and the putting down of the palette, and the downright way in which he had called her Clara Van Siever,—attempting to be neither sentimental with Clara, nor polite with Miss Van Siever,—did please her. She had often said to herself that she would never give a plain answer to a man who did not ask her a plain question;—to a man who, in asking this question, did not say plainly to her, "Clara Van Siever, will you become Mrs. Jones?"—or Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Tomkins, as the case might be. Now Conway Dalrymple had asked her to become Mrs. Dalrymple very much after this fashion. In spite of the apparition of her mother, all this had passed through her mind. Not the less, however, was she obliged to answer her mother, before she could give any reply to the other questioner. In the meantime Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had untucked her feet.

"Mamma," said Clara, "who ever expected to see you here?"

"I daresay nobody did," said Mrs. Van Siever; "but here I am, nevertheless."

“Madam,” said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, “you might at any rate have gone through the ceremony of having yourself announced by the servant.”

“Madam,” said the old woman, attempting to mimic the tone of the other, “I thought that on such a very particular occasion as this I might be allowed to announce myself. You tomfool, you, why don’t you take that turban off?” Then Clara, with slow and graceful motion, unwound the turban. If Dalrymple really meant what he had said, and would stick to it, she need not mind being called a tomfool by her mother.

“Conway, I am afraid that our last sitting is disturbed,” said Mrs. Broughton, with her little laugh.

“Conway’s last sitting certainly is disturbed,” said Mrs. Van Siever, and then she mimicked the laugh. “And you’ll all be disturbed,—I can tell you that. What an ass you must be to go on with this kind of thing, after what I said to you yesterday! Do you know that he got beastly drunk in the City last night, and that he is drunk now, while you are going on with your tomfooleries?” Upon hearing this, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton fainted into Dalrymple’s arms.

Hitherto the artist had not said a word, and had hardly known what part it would best become him now to play. If he intended to marry Clara,—and he certainly did intend to marry her if she would have him,—it might be as well not to quarrel with Mrs. Van Siever. At any rate there was nothing in Mrs. Van Siever’s intrusion, disagreeable as it was, which need make him take up his sword to do battle with her. But now, as he held Mrs. Broughton in his arms, and as the horrid words which the old woman had spoken rung in his ears, he could not refrain himself from uttering reproach. “You ought not to have told her in this way, before other people, even if it be true,” said Conway.

“Leave me to be my own judge of what I ought to do, if you please, sir. If she had any feeling at all, what I told her yesterday would have kept her from all this. But some people have no feeling, and will go on being tomfools though the house is on fire.” As these words were spoken, Mrs.

Broughton fainted more persistently than ever,—so that Dalrymple was convinced that whether she felt or not, at any rate she heard. He had now dragged her across the room, and laid her upon the sofa, and Clara had come to her assistance. “I daresay you think me very hard because I speak plainly, but there are things much harder than plain speaking. How much do you expect to be paid, sir, for this picture of my girl?”

“I do not expect to be paid for it at all,” said Dalrymple.

“And who is it to belong to?”

“It belongs to me at present.”

“Then, sir, it mustn’t belong to you any longer. It won’t do for you to have a picture of my girl to hang up in your painting-room for all your friends to come and make their jokes about, nor yet to make a show of it in any of your exhibitions. My daughter has been a fool, and I can’t help it. If you’ll tell me what’s the cost, I’ll pay you; then I’ll have the picture home, and I’ll treat it as it deserves.”

Dalrymple thought for a moment about his picture and about Mrs. Van Siever. What had he better do? He wanted to behave well, and he felt that the old woman had something of justice on her side. “Madam,” he said, “I will not sell this picture; but it shall be destroyed, if you wish it.”

“I certainly do wish it, but I won’t trust to you. If it’s not sent to my house at once you’ll hear from me through my lawyers.”

Then Dalrymple deliberately opened his penknife and slit the canvas across, through the middle of the picture each way. Clara, as she saw him do it, felt that in truth she loved him. “There, Mrs. Van Siever,” he said; “now you can take the bits home with you in your basket if you wish it.” At this moment, as the rent canvas fell and fluttered upon the stretcher, there came a loud voice of lamentation from the sofa, a groan of despair and a shriek of wrath. “Very fine indeed,” said Mrs. Van Siever. “When ladies faint they always ought to have their eyes about them. I see that Mrs. Broughton understands that.”

"Takeheraway, Conway—for God's sake takeheraway," said Mrs. Broughton.

"I shall take myself away very shortly," said Mrs. Van Siever, "so you needn't trouble Mr. Conway about that. Not but what I thought the gentleman's name was Mr. something else."

"My name is Conway Dalrymple," said the artist.

"Then I suppose you must be her brother, or her cousin, or something of that sort?" said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Take her away," screamed Mrs. Dobbs Broughton.

"Wait a moment, madam. As you've chopped up your handiwork there, Mr. Conway Dalrymple, and as I suppose my daughter has been more to blame than anybody else

"She has not been to blame at all," said Dalrymple.

"That's my affair, and not yours," said Mrs. Van Siever, very sharply. "But as you have been at all this trouble, and have now chopped it up, I don't mind paying you for your time and paints; only I shall be glad to know how much it will come to?"

"There will be nothing to pay, Mrs. Van Siever."

"How long has he been at it, Clara?"

"Mamma, indeed you had better not say anything about paying him."

"I shall say whatever I please, miss. Will ten pounds do it, sir?"

"If you choose to buy the picture, the price will be seven hundred and fifty," said Dalrymple, with a smile, pointing to the fragments.

"Seven hundred and fifty pounds?" said the old woman.

"But I strongly advise you not to make the purchase," said Dalrymple.

"Seven hundred and fifty pounds! I certainly shall not give you seven hundred and fifty pounds, sir."

"I certainly think you could invest your money better, Mrs. Van Siever. But if the thing is to be sold at all, that is my price. I've thought that there was some justice in your

demand that it should be destroyed,—and therefore I have destroyed it.”

Mrs. Van Siever had been standing on the same spot ever since she had entered the room, and now she turned round to leave the room.

“If you have any demand to make, I beg that you will send in your account for work done to Mr. Musselboro. He is my man of business. Clara, are you ready to come home? The cab is waiting at the door,—at sixpence the quarter of an hour, if you will be pleased to remember.”

“Mrs. Broughton,” said Clara, thoughtful of her raiment, and remembering that it might not be well that she should return home, even in a cab, dressed as Jael; “if you will allow me, I will go into your room for a minute or two.”

“Certainly, Clara,” said Mrs. Broughton, preparing to accompany her.

“But before you go, Mrs. Broughton,” said Mrs. Van Siever, “it may be as well that I should tell you that my daughter is going to become the wife of Mr. Musselboro. It may simplify matters that you should know this.” And Mrs. Van Siever, as she spoke, looked hard at Conway Dalrymple.

“Mamma!” exclaimed Clara.

“My dear,” said Mrs. Van Siever, “you had better change your dress and come away with me.”

“Not till I have protested against what you have said, mamma.”

“You had better leave your protesting alone, I can tell you.”

“Mrs. Broughton,” continued Clara, “I must beg you to understand that mamma has not the slightest right in the world to tell you what she just now said about me. Nothing on earth would induce me to become the wife of Mr. Broughton’s partner.”

There was something which made Clara unwilling even to name the man whom her mother had publicly proposed as her future husband.

"He isn't Mr. Broughton's partner," said Mrs. Van Siever. "Mr. Broughton has not got a partner. Mr. Musselboro is the head of the firm. And as to your marrying him, of course, I can't make you."

"No, mamma; you cannot."

"Mrs. Broughton understands that, no doubt;—and so, probably, does Mr. Dalrymple. I only tell them what are my ideas. If you choose to marry the sweep at the crossing, I can't help it. Only I don't see what good you would do the sweep, when he would have to sweep for himself and you too. At any rate, I suppose you mean to go home with me now?" Then Mrs. Broughton and Clara left the room, and Mrs. Van Siever was left with Conway Dalrymple. "Mr. Dalrymple," said Mrs. Van Siever, "do not deceive yourself. What I told you just now will certainly come to pass."

"It seems to me that that must depend on the young lady," said Dalrymple.

"I'll tell you what certainly will not depend on the young lady," said Mrs. Van Siever, "and that is whether the man who marries her will have more with her than the clothes she stands up in. You will understand that argument, I suppose?"

"I am not quite sure that I do," said Dalrymple.

"Then you'd better try to understand it. Good-morning, sir. I'm sorry you've had to slit your picture." Then she curtseyed low, and walked out on to the landing-place. "Clara," she cried, "I'm waiting for you—sixpence a quarter of an hour,—remember that." In a minute or two Clara came out to her, and then Mrs. Van Siever and Miss Van Siever took their departure.

"Oh, Conway, what am I to do? what am I to do?" said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Dalrymple stood perplexed for a few minutes, and could not tell her what she was to do. She was in such a position that it was very hard to tell her what to do. "Do you believe, Conway, that he is really ruined?"

"What am I to say? How am I to know?"

"I see that you believe it," said the wretched woman.

"I cannot but believe that there is something of truth in what this woman says. Why else should she come here with such a story?" Then there was a pause, during which Mrs. Broughton was burying her face on the arm of the sofa. "I'll tell you what I'll do," continued he. "I'll go into the City, and make inquiry. It can hardly be but what I shall learn the truth there."

Then there was another pause, at the end of which Mrs. Broughton got up from the sofa.

"Tell me," said she;—"what do you mean to do about that girl?"

"You heard me ask her to be my wife?"

"I did. I did!"

"Is it not what you intended?"

"Do not ask me. My mind is bewildered. My brain is on fire! Oh, Conway!"

"Shall I go into the City as I proposed?" said Dalrymple, who felt that he might at any rate improve the position of circumstances by leaving the house.

"Yes;—yes; go into the City! Go anywhere. Go. But stay! Oh, Conway!" There was a sudden change in her voice as she spoke. "Hark,—there he is, as sure as life." Then Conway listened, and heard a footstep on the stairs, as to which he had then but little doubt that it was the footstep of Dobbs Broughton. "O heavens! he is tipsy!" exclaimed Mrs. Broughton; "and what shall we do?" Then Dalrymple took her hand and pressed it, and left the room, so that he might meet the husband on the stairs. In the one moment that he had for reflection he thought it was better that there should be no concealment.

CHAPTER LXI

“It’s dogged as does it”

IN accordance with the resolution to which the clerical commission had come on the first day of their sitting, Dr. Tempest wrote the following letter to Mr. Crawley:—

“Rectory, Silverbridge, April 9, 186—.

“DEAR SIR,—

“I HAVE been given to understand that you have been informed that the Bishop of Barchester has appointed a commission of clergymen of the diocese to make inquiry respecting certain accusations which, to the great regret of us all, have been made against you, in respect to a cheque for twenty pounds which was passed by you to a tradesman in this town. The clergymen appointed to form this commission are Mr. Oriel, the rector of Greshamsbury, Mr. Robarts, the vicar of Framley, Mr. Quiverful, the warden of Hiram’s Hospital at Barchester, Mr. Thumble, a clergyman established in that city, and myself. We held our first meeting on last Monday, and I now write to you in compliance with a resolution to which we then came. Before taking any other steps we thought it best to ask you to attend us here on next Monday, at two o’clock, and I beg that you will accept this letter as an invitation to that effect.

“We are, of course, aware that you are about to stand your trial at the next assizes for the offence in question. I beg you to understand that I do not express my opinion as to your guilt. But I think it right to point out to you that in the event of a jury finding an adverse verdict, the bishop might be placed in great difficulty unless he were fortified with the opinion of a commission formed from your fellow clerical labourers in the diocese. Should such adverse verdict unfortunately be given, the bishop would hardly be

justified in allowing a clergyman placed as you then would be placed, to return to his cure after the expiration of such punishment as the judge might award, without a further decision from an ecclesiastical court. This decision he could only obtain by proceeding against you under the Act in reference to clerical offences, which empowers him as bishop of the diocese to bring you before the Court of Arches,—unless you would think well to submit yourself entirely to his judgment. You will, I think, understand what I mean. The judge at assizes might find it his duty to imprison a clergyman for a month,—regarding that clergyman simply as he would regard any other person found guilty by a jury and thus made subject to his judgment,—and might do this for an offence which the ecclesiastical judge would find himself obliged to visit with the severer sentence of prolonged suspension, or even with deprivation.

“We are, however, clearly of opinion that should the jury find themselves able to acquit you, no further action whatsoever should be taken. In such case we think that the bishop may regard your innocence to be fully established, and in such case we shall recommend his lordship to look upon the matter as altogether at an end. I can assure you that in such case I shall so regard it myself.

“You will perceive that, as a consequence of this resolution, to which we have already come, we are not minded to make any inquiries ourselves into the circumstances of your alleged guilt, till the verdict of the jury shall be given. If you are acquitted, our course will be clear. But should you be convicted, we must in that case advise the bishop to take the proceedings to which I have alluded, or to abstain from taking them. We wish to ask you whether, now that our opinion has been conveyed to you, you will be willing to submit to the bishop’s decision, in the event of an adverse verdict being given by the jury; and we think that it will be better for us all that you should meet us here at the hour I have named on Monday next, the 15th instant.

It is not our intention to make any report to the bishop until the trial shall be over.

“I have the honour to be,

“My dear sir,

“Your very obedient servant,

MORTIMER TEMPEST.

“The Rev. Josiah Crawley,
“Hogglestock.”

In the same envelope Dr. Tempest sent a short private note, in which he said that he should be very happy to see Mr. Crawley at half-past one on the Monday named, that luncheon would be ready at that hour, and that, as Mr. Crawley’s attendance was required on public grounds, he would take care that a carriage was provided for the day.

Mr. Crawley received this letter in his wife’s presence, and read it in silence. Mrs. Crawley saw that he paid close attention to it, and was sure,—she felt that she was sure,—that it referred in some way to the terrible subject of the cheque for twenty pounds. Indeed, everything that came into the house, almost every word spoken there, and every thought that came into the breasts of any of the family, had more or less reference to the coming trial. How could it be otherwise? There was ruin coming on them all,—ruin and complete disgrace coming on father, mother, and children! To have been accused itself was very bad; but now it seemed to be the opinion of every one that the verdict must be against the man. Mrs. Crawley herself, who was perfectly sure of her husband’s innocence before God, believed that the jury would find him guilty,—and believed also that he had become possessed of the money in some manner that would have been dishonest, had he not been so different from other people as to be entitled to be considered innocent where another man would have been plainly guilty. She was full of the cheque for twenty pounds, and of its results. When, therefore, he had read the letter through a second time, and even then had spoken no word about it,

of course she could not refrain from questioning him. "My love," she said, "what is the letter?"

"It is on business," he answered.

She was silent for a moment before she spoke again. "May I not know the business?"

"No," said he; "not at present."

"Is it from the bishop?"

"Have I not answered you? Have I not given you to understand that, for a while at least, I would prefer to keep the contents of this epistle to myself?" Then he looked at her very sternly, and afterwards turned his eyes upon the fireplace and gazed at the fire, as though he were striving to read there something of his future fate. She did not much regard the severity of his speech. That, too, like the taking of the cheque itself, was to be forgiven him, because he was different from other men. His black mood had come upon him, and everything was to be forgiven him now. He was as a child when cutting his teeth. Let the poor wayward sufferer be ever so petulant, the mother simply pities and loves him, and is never angry. "I beg your pardon, Josiah," she said, "but I thought it would comfort you to speak to me about it."

"It will not comfort me," he said. "Nothing comforts me. Nothing can comfort me. Jane, give me my hat and my stick." His daughter brought to him his hat and stick, and without another word he went out and left them.

As a matter of course he turned his steps towards Hoggle End. When he desired to be long absent from the house, he always went among the brickmakers. His wife, as she stood at the window and watched the direction in which he went, knew that he might be away for hours. The only friends out of his own family with whom he ever spoke freely were some of these rough parishioners. But he was not thinking of the brickmakers when he started. He was simply desirous of again reading Dr. Tempest's letter, and of considering it, in some spot where no eye could see him. He walked away with long steps, regarding nothing,—

neither the ruts in the dirty lane, nor the young primroses which were fast showing themselves on the banks, nor the gathering clouds which might have told him of the coming rain. He went on for a couple of miles, till he had nearly reached the outskirts of the colony of Hoggle End, and then he sat himself down upon a gate. He had not been there a minute before a few slow large drops began to fall, but he was altogether too much wrapped up in his thoughts to regard the rain. What answer should he make to this letter from the man at Silverbridge?

The position of his own mind in reference to his own guilt or his own innocence was very singular. It was simply the truth that he did not know how the cheque had come to him. He did know that he had blundered about it most egregiously, especially when he had averred that this cheque for twenty pounds had been identical with a cheque for another sum which had been given to him by Mr. Soames. He had blundered since, in saying that the dean had given it to him. There could be no doubt as to this, for the dean had denied that he had done so. And he had come to think it very possible that he had indeed picked the cheque up, and had afterwards used it, having deposited it by some strange accident,—not knowing then what he was doing, or what was the nature of the bit of paper in his hand,—with the notes which he had accepted from the dean with so much reluctance, with such an agony of spirit. In all these thoughts of his own about his own doings, and his own position, he almost admitted to himself his own insanity, his inability to manage his own affairs with that degree of rational sequence which is taken for granted as belonging to a man when he is made subject to criminal laws. As he puzzled his brain in his efforts to create a memory as to the cheque, and succeeded in bringing to his mind a recollection that he had once known something about the cheque,—that the cheque had at one time been the subject of a thought and of a resolution,—he admitted to himself that in accordance with all law and all reason he must be

regarded as a thief. He had taken and used and spent that which he ought to have known was not his own;—which he would have known not to be his own but for some terrible incapacity with which God had afflicted him. What then must be the result? His mind was clear enough about this. If the jury could see everything and know everything,—as he would wish that they should do; and if this bishop's commission, and the bishop himself, and the Court of Arches with its judge, could see and know everything; and if so seeing and so knowing they could act with clear honesty and perfect wisdom,—what would they do? They would declare of him that he was not a thief, only because he was so muddy-minded, so addle-pated as not to know the difference between *meum* and *tuum*! There could be no other end to it, let all the lawyers and all the clergymen in England put their wits to it. Though he knew himself to be muddy-minded and addle-pated, he could see that. And could any one say of such a man that he was fit to be the acting clergyman of a parish,—to have a freehold possession in a parish as curer of men's souls! The bishop was in the right of it, let him be ten times as mean a fellow as he was.

And yet as he sat there on the gate, while the rain came down heavily upon him, even when admitting the justice of the bishop, and the truth of the verdict which the jury would no doubt give, and the propriety of the action which that cold, reasonable, prosperous man at Silverbridge would take, he pitied himself with a tenderness of commiseration which knew no bounds. As for those belonging to him, his wife and children, his pity for them was of a different kind. He would have suffered any increase of suffering, could he by such agony have released them. Dearly as he loved them, he would have severed himself from them, had it been possible. Terrible thoughts as to their fate had come into his mind in the worst moments of his moodiness,—thoughts which he had had sufficient strength and manliness to put away from him with a strong hand, lest they should drive

him to crime indeed; and these had come from the great pity which he had felt for them. But the commiseration which he had felt for himself had been different from this, and had mostly visited him at times when that other pity was for the moment in abeyance. What though he had taken the cheque, and spent the money though it was not his? He might be guilty before the law, but he was not guilty before God. There had never been a thought of theft in his mind, or a desire to steal in his heart. He knew that well enough. No jury could make him guilty of theft before God. And what though this mixture of guilt and innocence had come from madness,—from madness which these courts must recognize if they chose to find him innocent of the crime? In spite of his aberrations of intellect, if there were any such, his ministrations in his parish were good. Had he not preached fervently and well,—preaching the true gospel? Had he not been very diligent among his people, striving with all his might to lessen the ignorance of the ignorant, and to gild with godliness the learning of the instructed? Had he not been patient, enduring, instant, and in all things amenable to the laws and regulations laid down by the Church for his guidance in his duties as a parish clergyman? Who could point out in what he had been astray, or where he had gone amiss? But for the work which he had done with so much zeal the Church which he served had paid him so miserable a pittance that, though life and soul had been kept together, the reason, or a fragment of the reason, had at moments escaped from his keeping in the scramble. Hence it was that this terrible calamity had fallen upon him! Who had been tried as he had been tried, and had gone through such fire with less loss of intellectual power than he had done? He was still a scholar, though no brother scholar ever came near him, and would make Greek iambics as he walked along the lanes. His memory was stored with poetry, though no book ever came to his hands, except those shorn and tattered volumes which lay upon his table. Old problems in trigonometry were the pleasing

relaxations of his mind, and complications of figures were a delight to him. There was not one of those prosperous clergymen around him, and who scorned him, whom he could not have instructed in Hebrew. It was always a gratification to him to remember that his old friend the dean was weak in his Hebrew. He, with these acquirements, with these fitnesses, had been thrust down to the ground,—to the very granite,—and because in that harsh heartless thrusting his intellect had for moments wavered as to common things, cleaving still to all its grander, nobler possessions, he was now to be rent in pieces and scattered to the winds, as being altogether vile, worthless, and worse than worthless. It was thus that he thought of himself, pitying himself, as he sat upon the gate, while the rain fell ruthlessly on his shoulders.

He pitied himself with a commiseration that was sickly in spite of its truth. It was the fault of the man that he was imbued too strongly with self-consciousness. He could do a great thing or two. He could keep up his courage in positions which would wash all courage out of most men. He could tell the truth though truth should ruin him. He could sacrifice all that he had to duty. He could do justice though the heaven should fall. But he could not forget to pay a tribute to himself for the greatness of his own actions; nor, when accepting with an effort of meekness the small payment made by the world to him, in return for his great works, could he forget the great payments made to others for small work. It was not sufficient for him to remember that he knew Hebrew, but he must remember also that the dean did not.

Nevertheless, as he sat there under the rain, he made up his mind with a clearness that certainly had in it nothing of that muddiness of mind of which he had often accused himself. Indeed, the intellect of this man was essentially clear. It was simply his memory that would play him tricks,—his memory as to things which at the moment were not important to him. The fact that the dean had given him money

was very important, and he remembered it well. But the amount of the money, and its form, at a moment in which he had flattered himself that he might have strength to leave it unused, had not been important to him. Now, he resolved that he would go to Dr. Tempest, and that he would tell Dr. Tempest that there was no occasion for any further inquiry. He would submit to the bishop, let the bishop’s decision be what it might. Things were different since the day on which he had refused Mr. Thumble admission to his pulpit. At that time people believed him to be innocent, and he so believed of himself. Now, people believed him to be guilty, and it could not be right that a man held in such slight esteem should exercise the functions of a parish priest, let his own opinion of himself be what it might. He would submit himself, and go anywhere,—to the galleys or the workhouse, if they wished it. As for his wife and children, they would, he said to himself, be better without him than with him. The world would never be so hard to a woman or to children as it had been to him.

He was sitting saturated with rain,—saturated also with thinking,—and quite unobservant of anything around him, when he was accosted by an old man from Hoggle End, with whom he was well acquainted. “Thee be wat, Master Crawley,” said the old man.

“Wet!” said Crawley, recalled suddenly back to the realities of life. “Well,—yes. I am wet. That’s because it’s raining.”

“Thee be teeming o’ wat. Hadn’t thee better go whome?”

“And are not you wet also?” said Mr. Crawley, looking at the old man, who had been at work in the brickfield, and who was soaked with mire, and from whom there seemed to come a steam of muddy mist.

“Is it me, yer reverence? I’m wat in course. The loikes of us is always wat,—that is barring the insides of us. It comes to us natural to have the rheumatics. How is one of us to help hisself against having on ‘em? But there ain’t no call for the loikes of you to have the rheumatics.”

"My friend," said Crawley, who was now standing on the road,—and as he spoke he put out his arm and took the brickmaker by the hand, "there is a worse complaint than rheumatism,—there is, indeed."

"There's what they call the *collerer*," said Giles Hoggett, looking up into Mr. Crawley's face. "That ain't a got a hold of yer?"

"Ay, and worse than the cholera. A man is killed all over when he is struck in his pride;—and yet he lives."

"Maybe that's bad enough too," said Giles, with his hand still held by the other.

"It is bad enough," said Mr. Crawley, striking his breast with his left hand. "It is bad enough."

"Tell 'ee what, Master Crawley;—and yer reverence mustn't think as I means to be preaching; there ain't nowt a man can't bear if he'll only be dogged. You go whome, Master Crawley, and think o' that, and maybe it'll do ye a good yet. It's dogged as does it. It ain't thinking about it." Then Giles Hoggett withdrew his hand from the clergyman's, and walked away towards his home at Hoggle End. Mr. Crawley also turned homewards, and as he made his way through the lanes, he repeated to himself Giles Hoggett's words. "It's dogged as does it. It's not thinking about it."

He did not say a word to his wife on that afternoon about Dr. Tempest; and she was so much taken up with his outward condition when he returned, as almost to have forgotten the letter. He allowed himself, but barely allowed himself, to be made dry, and then for the remainder of the day applied himself to learn the lesson which Hoggett had endeavoured to teach him. But the learning of it was not easy, and hardly became more easy when he had worked the problem out in his own mind, and discovered that the brickmaker's doggedness simply meant self-abnegation;—that a man should force himself to endure anything that might be sent upon him, not only without outward grumbling, but also without grumbling inwardly.



Early on the next morning, he told his wife that he was going into Silverbridge. “It is that letter,—the letter which I got yesterday that calls me,” he said. And then he handed her the letter as to which he had refused to speak to her on the preceding day.

“But this speaks of your going next Monday, Josiah,” said Mrs. Crawley.

“I find it to be more suitable that I should go to-day,” said he. “Some duty I do owe in this matter, both to the bishop, and to Dr. Tempest, who, after a fashion, is, as regards my present business, the bishop’s representative. But I do not perceive that I owe it as a duty to either to obey implicitly their injunctions, and I will not submit myself to the cross-questionings of the man Thumble. As I am purposed at present I shall express my willingness to give up the parish.”

“Give up the parish altogether?”

“Yes, altogether.” As he spoke he clasped both his hands together, and having held them for a moment on high, allowed them to fall thus clasped before him. “I cannot give it up in part; I cannot abandon the duties and reserve the honorarium. Nor would I if I could.”

“I did not mean that, Josiah. But pray think of it before you speak.”

“I have thought of it, and I will think of it. Farewell, my dear.” Then he came up to her and kissed her, and started on his journey on foot to Silverbridge.

It was about noon when he reached Silverbridge, and he was told that Dr. Tempest was at home. The servant asked him for a card. “I have no card,” said Mr. Crawley, “but I will write my name for your behoof if your master’s hospitality will allow me paper and pencil.” The name was written, and as Crawley waited in the drawing-room he spent his time in hating Dr. Tempest because the door had been opened by a man-servant dressed in black. Had the man been in livery he would have hated Dr. Tempest all the same. And he would have hated him a little had the door been opened even by a smart maid.

“Your letter came to hand yesterday morning, Dr. Tempest,” said Mr. Crawley, still standing, though the doctor had pointed to a chair for him after shaking hands with him; “and having given yesterday to the consideration of it, with what judgment I have been able to exercise, I have felt it to be incumbent upon me to wait upon you without further delay, as by doing so I may perhaps assist your views and save labour to those gentlemen who are joined with you in this commission of which you have spoken. To some of them it may possibly be troublesome that they should be brought together here on next Monday.”

Dr. Tempest had been looking at him during this speech, and could see by his shoes and trowsers that he had walked from Hogglestock to Silverbridge. “Mr. Crawley, will you not sit down?” said he, and then he rang his bell. Mr. Crawley sat down, not on the chair indicated, but on one further removed and at the other side of the table. When the servant came,—the objectionable butler in black clothes that were so much smarter than Mr. Crawley’s own,—his master’s orders were communicated without any audible word, and the man returned with a decanter and wine-glasses.

“After your walk, Mr. Crawley,” said Dr. Tempest, getting up from his seat to pour out the wine.

“None, I thank you.”

“Pray let me persuade you. I know the length of the miles so well.”

“I will take none, if you please, sir,” said Mr. Crawley.

“Now, Mr. Crawley,” said Dr. Tempest, “do let me speak to you as a friend. You have walked eight miles, and are going to talk to me on a subject which is of vital importance to yourself. I won’t discuss it unless you’ll take a glass of wine and a biscuit.”

“Dr. Tempest!”

“I’m quite in earnest. I won’t. If you do as I ask you, you shall talk to me till dinner-time, if you like it. There. Now you may begin.”

Mr. Crawley did eat the biscuit and did drink the wine,

and as he did so, he acknowledged to himself that Dr. Tempest was right. He felt that the wine made him stronger to speak. “I hardly know why you have preferred to-day to next Monday,” said Dr. Tempest; “but if anything can be done by your presence here to-day, your time shall not be thrown away.”

“I have preferred to-day to Monday,” said Crawley, “partly because I would sooner talk to one man than to five.”

“There is something in that, certainly,” said Dr. Tempest.

“And as I have made up my mind as to the course of action which it is my duty to take in the matter to which your letter of the 9th of this month refers, there can be no reason why I should postpone the declaration of my purpose. Dr. Tempest, I have determined to resign my preferment at Hogglestock, and shall write to-day to the Dean of Barchester, who is the patron, acquainting him of my purpose.”

“You mean in the event—in the event——”

“I mean, sir, to do this without reference to any event that is future. The bishop, Dr. Tempest, when I shall have been proved to be a thief, shall have no trouble either in causing my suspension or my deprivation. The name and fame of a parish clergyman should be unstained. Mine have become foul with infamy. I will not wait to be deprived by any court, by any bishop, or by any commission. I will bow my head to that public opinion which has reached me, and I will deprive myself.”

He had got up from his chair, and was standing as he pronounced the final sentence against himself. Dr. Tempest still remained seated in his chair, looking at him, and for a few moments there was silence. “You must not do that, Mr. Crawley,” Dr. Tempest said at last.

“But I shall do it.”

“Then the dean must not take your resignation. Speaking to you frankly, I tell you that there is no prevailing opinion as to the verdict which the jury may give.”

“My decision has nothing to do with the jury’s verdict. My decision——”

“Stop a moment, Mr. Crawley. It is possible that you might say that which should not be said.”

“There is nothing to be said,—nothing which I could say, which I would not say at the town cross if it were possible. As to this money, I do not know whether I stole it or whether I did not.”

“That is just what I have thought.”

“It is so.”

“Then you did not steal it. There can be no doubt about that.”

“Thank you, Dr. Tempest. I thank you heartily for saying so much. But, sir, you are not the jury. Nor, if you were, could you whitewash me from the infamy which has been cast on me. Against the opinion expressed at the beginning of these proceedings by the bishop of the diocese,—or rather against that expressed by his wife,—I did venture to make a stand. Neither the opinion which came from the palace, nor the vehicle by which it was expressed, commanded my respect. Since that, others have spoken to whom I feel myself bound to yield;—yourself not the least among them, Dr. Tempest;—and to them I shall yield. You may tell the Bishop of Barchester that I shall at once resign the perpetual curacy of Hogglestock into the hands of the Dean of Barchester, by whom I was appointed.”

“No, Mr. Crawley; I shall not do that. I cannot control you, but thinking you to be wrong, I shall not make that communication to the bishop.”

“Then I shall do so myself.”

“And your wife, Mr. Crawley, and your children?”

At that moment Mr. Crawley called to mind the advice of his friend Giles Hoggett. “It’s dogged as does it.” He certainly wanted something very strong to sustain him in his difficulty. He found that this reference to his wife and children required him to be dogged in a very marked man-

ner. "I can only trust that the wind may be tempered to them," he said. "They will, indeed, be shorn lambs."

Dr. Tempest got up from his chair, and took a couple of turns about the room before he spoke again. "Man," he said, addressing Mr. Crawley with all his energy, "if you do this thing, you will then at least be very wicked. If the jury find a verdict in your favour you are safe, and the chances are that the verdict will be in your favour."

"I care nothing now for the verdict," said Mr. Crawley.

"And you will turn your wife into the poorhouse for an ideal!"

"It's dogged as does it," said Mr. Crawley to himself. "I have thought of that," he said aloud. "That my wife is dear to me, and that my children are dear, I will not deny. She was softly nurtured, Dr. Tempest, and came from a house in which want was never known. Since she has shared my board she has had some experience of that nature. That I should have brought her to all this is very terrible to me, —so terrible, that I often wonder how it is that I live. But, sir, you will agree with me, that my duty as a clergyman is above everything. I do not dare, even for their sake, to remain in the parish. Good morning, Dr. Tempest." Dr. Tempest, finding that he could not prevail with him, bade him adieu, feeling that any service to the Crawleys within his power might be best done by intercession with the bishop and with the dean.

Then Mr. Crawley walked back to Hogglestock, repeating to himself Giles Hoggett's words, "It's dogged as does it."

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND, PART ONE

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